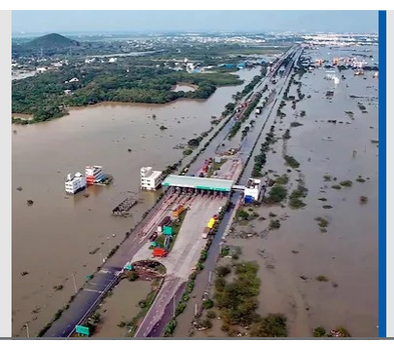
NATION

‘Over 85% of districts at risk from climate extremes’

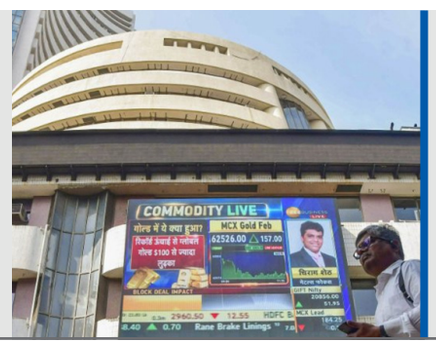
≫ Page: 4 ≪



BUSINESS

Sensex tanks 1,017 pts to close at 2-week low

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for DL season finale in Brussels

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 7 SEPTEMBER 2024 | SATURDAY | BENGALURU | 2 RABI’L, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 226 | Pages: 8

HAPPY GANESHA CHATURTHI

On the occasion of Ganesha Chaturthi, our offices will remain closed on 7th September, 2024. Hence, there will be no edition of the Salar Digital English Daily dated 8th September, 2024.

Article 370 now ‘history’, will never come back: Shah

The Home Minister released BJP’s manifesto for J&K polls

JAMMU, 6 SEPT

Highlighting an appreciable decrease in terror-related and stone-pelting incidents in the past 10 years in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asserted that Article 370 has become “history” and will never make a comeback.

Releasing BJP’s manifesto for the Jammu and Kashmir polls, Shah also questioned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his party’s alliance with National Conference (NC), and urged people to vote for BJP to continue good governance.

He said the last 10-year period will be written about in golden letters in the history of the country and Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah reached Jammu earlier in the day on a two-day visit to kickstart the BJP’s campaign for the Assembly polls scheduled to be held in three phases on 18, 25 September and 1 October. This is the first election in the erstwhile state after its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution was revoked and it was bifurcated into two Union territories – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh – in August 2019.

He said Article 370 is not part of the Constitution anymore. “This Article was the reason why weapons and stones were handed to the youth and they were then facilitated to tread the path of terrorism instead of contributing to development,” Shah added.

The BJP leader also accused the previous governments of bowing down before separatism, and said peace, development and social justice were restored on the ground after the abrogation of Article 370.

Shah added that the past 10 years saw peace, prosperity and development.

“The sound of guns and bomb blasts used to be heard in Kashmir for a very long time but everything changed in the last 10 years. A total of 7,217 (terror-related) incidents happened between 2004 and 2014 but the number dropped to 2,272 between 2014 and 2024, marking a 70 per cent decrease. The overall killings also dropped by 76 per cent and civilian killings by 80 per cent while there is a huge downward trend in security force casualties,” the minister said. *—PTI*

Home Minister Amit Shah addresses the media after the release of the party’s manifesto **PHOTO: PTI**

- Shah reached Jammu earlier in the day on a two-day visit to kickstart BJP’s campaign for the Assembly polls scheduled to be held in three phases.

BJP’S J&K POLL PROMISES

- ₹10,000 to farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi
- Reduce electricity rates for agriculture activities by 50%
- Generate 5 lakh jobs for youth
- ₹3,000 travel annual allowance for students
- Add 1,000 new seats in medical colleges
- Construct 10,000 km of new rural roads.
- Rebuild and renovate Hindu temples
- ₹18,000 annually for the senior-most woman in each household u
- Transform Jammu and Kashmir from a “terrorist hotspot to a tourist spot

BEST PARA MEDAL HAUL

Sensational Praveen strikes Gold in high jump

PARIS, 6 SEPT

India’s Praveen Kumar dazzled with a record-breaking performance in the men’s high jump T64 event, adding a Paralympic gold to his Tokyo Games silver here on Friday.

The 21-year-old from Noida, who was born with a short leg, smashed the Asian record with a best jump of 2.08m in the six-men field to finish on top of the podium.

USA’s Derek Loccident claimed the silver with a jump of 2.06m while Uzbekistan’s Temurbek Giyazov, who notched a personal best 2.03m, finished third.

India jumped to the 14th spot in the pecking order after Praveen’s win.

The country has so far won six gold, nine silver and 11 bronze medals to achieve its best-ever haul at a single edition of the Paralympic Games.

India surpassed its Tokyo Games gold medal tally after Praveen’s triumph in the men’s high jump T64 event. At the Tokyo Paralympics, India had won five gold, six silver, and eight bronze medals.

Praveen won the country its sixth gold medal after clearing 2.08m. Opting to start from 1.89m, Kumar aced seven jumps in his first attempt to put himself in pole position to grab the coveted gold medal.

The bar was then raised to 2.10m, with both Kumar and Loccident fighting for the top spot on the podium but failed to clear the mark. This was also the 2023 world championship bronze medallist’s personal best performance. T64 is for athletes with movement moderately affected in one lower leg or the absence of one or both legs below the knee. While T44, under which Praveen is categorised, is for athletes with movement affected at a low or moderate degree in one lower leg. His impairment, which is congenital, affects the bones that connect his hip to his left leg. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

PHOTO: PTI

Vinesh, Bajrang Punia join Cong ahead of polls

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Ending days of speculation, wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia joined Congress on Friday ahead of the Haryana Assembly polls. Phogat and Punia met Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge at his 10, Rajaji Marg, residence. They later joined Congress at the AICC headquarters in the presence of Congress General Secretary in-charge organisation KC Venugopal, AICC General Secretary in-charge Haryana Deepak Babaria, Haryana Congress Chief Uday Bhan and Congress’ media and publicity department head Pawan Khera. Venugopal claimed that Phogat had been issued a showcase notice by the Railways after she met Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Sources said the notice talked about violating service rules. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Waqf board takes over illegal mosque in Shimla

SHIMLA, 6 SEPT

Amid the ongoing protest over the ‘illegal’ construction of Sanjauli mosque in Himachal Pradesh’s Shimla, the Waqf Board on Friday took action in connection to the row and has taken the entire mosque under its control. Waqf Board further acknowledged that the floors of the mosque were constructed ‘illegally’. The massive controversy over the mosque intensified on Wednesday after a heated debate in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly, where minister and Congress leader Anirudh Singh demanded an investigation into the illegal construction of Shimla’s Sanjauli Masjid, highlighting that it is leading to tensions in the area. Singh’s allegations, however, were countered by his party MLAs. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 4

Punjab farmers end protest after CM’s assurance

CHANDIGARH, 6 SEPT

Farmers protesting against the alleged delay in implementation of Punjab’s new agriculture policy ended their strike on Friday, a day after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann assured them that a draft of the policy would be shared with them by 30 September. Mann also assured them that their suggestions would be incorporated before the policy’s implementation. Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said they had urged the State government to make the agriculture policy public. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

CBI rules out gangrape in RG Kar doc’s death

KOLKATA, 6 SEPT

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has ruled out possibility of gangrape in the death of RG Kar trainee doctor’s rape and murder on 9 August according to sources. The sources stated that the evidence indicates only Sanjay Roy, accused, involvement on Friday. The inquiry is in its ‘final stages’ and that the agency will soon file charges. The agency will look to wrap up this inquiry after receiving doctors’ final opinion on the material as they have sent the final DNA report to experts at AIIMS in Delhi.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday the case it has initiated on its own regarding. As per the cause list for 9 September uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is slated to hear the matter. The hearing assumes significance in the wake of a recent application filed by the Centre alleging “unpardonable” non-cooperation by the West Bengal government in extending logistical support to the CISF, tasked with providing security at the hospital. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Supreme Court **PHOTO: PTI**

WB Guv refers anti-rape Bill to President Murmu

KOLKATA, 6 SEPT

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Friday referred the anti-rape Bill passed by the Asembly to President Droupadi Murmu for her consideration, a Raj Bhavan official said. Bose, who was handed over the technical report of the bill by Chief Secretary Manoj Pant earlier in the day, referred the Bill to Murmu after going through it, he said. “Governor refers the ‘Aparajita Bill’ to President Droupadi Murmu for consideration.

FESTIVE FERVOUR

People purchase Ganeshs idols and pooja materials on the eve of Ganesha Chaturthi festival in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

EUROPEAN CLIMATE CHANGE SERVICE SAYS 2024 TO BE WARMEST YEAR EVER

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

With global temperatures for the January-August period recorded at 0.70 degrees Celsius above the 1991–2020 average, the European Climate Change Service Copernicus (C3S) said on Friday that it was increasingly likely 2024 would be the warmest year on record.

According to the latest update from the C3S, August was the joint warmest August globally (along with August 2023), with an average surface air temperature of 16.82 degrees Celsius -- 0.71 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the month. *—PTI*

Man killed in bomb attack on ex-Manipur CM’s home

IMPHAL, 6 SEPT

An elderly man was killed and five others were injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a residential area of Moirang in Bishnupur district on Friday afternoon, officials said.

The rocket which fell on the compound of former chief minister Mairembam Koireng’s residence seemed to be an improvised one.

It is the second rocket that was fired in the district on Friday.

Five others, including a 13-year-old girl, were injured in the explosion. The rocket fell at a spot around two km from the INA headquarters. On April 14, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Ali of the Indian National Army (INA) hoisted the Tricolor Flag of free India for the first time on Indian soil under the guidance of INA Supreme Commander Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Moirang.

Earlier in the day, rockets were fired from elevated positions in the nearby hill areas of Churachandpur district toward the low-lying residential locality of Tronglaobi, located around 45km from state capital Imphal. The range of the rockets was estimated to be over 3km, police said. The Manipur government on Friday announced the closure of schools on 7 September in view of unrest arising out of bomb attacks in Bishnupur district. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

A team of Mobile Forensic Unit collects evidence from the rocket attack scene in Bishnupur

Imphal holds human chain rally protest

Thousands of people across five districts of Imphal Valley on Friday took part in a series of human chain rallies to protest the recent drone and gun attacks in Manipur . Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the government.

>>>More on Page 4

15 killed, 16 injured after bus hits van on Agra NH

HATHRAS, 6 SEPT

At least 15 people, including four women and an equal number of children, travelling in a van were killed on Friday after a roadways bus hit the vehicle from behind on National Highway 93 here, officials said.

Thirteen others were injured in the accident and they have been admitted to a government hospital.

Taking cognisance of the accident, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed district officials to reach the spot and take care of relief measures. He has also asked officials to ensure proper treatment of the injured.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Nipun Agarwal said, “The accident occurred when the bus hit the van while trying to overtake it on the Agra-Aligarh National Highway.”

The accident occurred near the Kanwarpur village, about 10 kilometers away from the district headquarters.

The passengers were on their way to Agra from Hathras. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

AS PEOPLE WATCH

Man rapes woman on footpath in Ujjain

UJJAIN, 6 SEPT

Madhya Pradesh police identified three to four suspects, who allegedly shot a video of a woman scrap collector’s rape, and efforts were on to nab them, an official said on Friday.

She was raped by a man after he forced her to consume liquor in Agar Naka area of Ujjain. A purported video, shared widely on social media in which a woman is being raped on a public footpath in Madhya Pradesh’s Ujjain district has triggered outrage and a war of words between Congress and BJP. “We have identified three to four suspects who shot a video of the incident and made it viral. As per our information, all of them are at different locations and police teams are trying to nab them,” Kotwali area’s City Superintendent of Police (CSP), Om Prakash Mishra, said. The prime accused in the case, Lokesh, had promised to marry the woman. On Wednesday, he forced her to drink liquor and raped her. Some people, who were passing by, shot videos of the incident instead of stopping the crime, Mishra said.

Lokesh later fled from the spot. After the woman filed a complaint, he was arrested, he added. Congress leader Pramod Tiwari also targeted the BJP-ruled states and said, “The nation is feeling ashamed. The honour of women is being shredded in all the BJP-ruling states...Why are the BJP-led state governments silent?” *—Agencies*

A purported video, shared on social media, in which a woman is being raped on a footpath has triggered outrage **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Two youths die as bike skids in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 6 SEPT

Two youths on a bike died after their vehicle skidded near Yeyyadi in Mangaluru in the wee hours of Friday, police said. The incident took place around 2.30 am, when they were returning home after working at Chalukya Bar in Shaktinagar. The deceased have been identified as Chetan, 21, of Ramakun-ja and Kashi, 17, of Urva Store in Mangaluru city. The youth were travel-ling with friends on three sepa-rate motorcycles. The bike that Chetan and Kashi were travelling on skidded on the road near Yeyyadi. They were rushed to a pri-vate hospital but were pro-nounced brought dead. South Police Station has registered a case and is investigating. *—PTI*

Yediyur Lake set for Ganesha idols immersion

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Yediyur Lake Discharge Pond (Kalyani) in Padmanabha Nagar, South Bengaluru, has been set up for the immersion of Ganesha idols. Starting from Saturday, the pond is set to accom-modate around 1.75 lakh Ganesha idols which are expected to be immersed in a span of 11 days, from 7 to 17 September. This annual rit-ual saw a similar number of idols immersed in 2023. Officials have announced that on 10 September, there will be no idol immersion allowed due to a scheduled cleaning of the discharge pond. Immersions will resume from 11 September during which the City Corpo-ration has arranged adequate facilities for the immersion. The discharge pond is specifically reserved for idols made of clay, and idols made of Plaster of Paris (POP) are strictly pro-hibited due to environmen-tal concerns. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Sugriva heaviest among 2nd batch of Dasara jumbos

MYSURU, 6 SEPT

The weight test for a sec-ond batch of five Dasara elephants, which arrived in Mysuru Palace on Thurs-day, was conducted in the city on Friday. Sugriva, the 41-year-old, is the heaviest (5,160kg), followed by Prashantha (4,875 kg), Mahendra (4,190 kg), Doddaharave Lakshmi (3,485kg) and Hiranya (2,930kg). After golden howdah-carrying Abhimanyu, Sugriva is the second highest weighing elephant among the 14 Dasara jumbos that are par-ticipating in Jamboo Savari procession on 12 October this year. Deputy Conservator of Forests Prabhugowda Biradar said his department started a special diet and training on Friday to familiarise the newly arrived five jumbos *—Salar News*

File criminal case against ex-MUDA chief: BJP leader

MYSURU, 6 SEPT

State BJP OBC Morcha President R Raghu Kautilya on Friday urged State gov-ernment to suspend former MUDA commissioner DB Natesh as well as special land acquisition officer and secretary served during his period as they were respon-sible for distributing sites under controversial 50:50 scheme and for MUDA. Kautilya said he had written a letter to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Urban Development Secretary Deepa M and Additional Chief Secretary of Urban Development Department Umashankar seeking to take action against the trio. Though the government banned distributing sites under the 50:50 ratio scheme, the officers flouted the government rules, dis-tributing sites illegally to a lot of beneficiaries, includ-ing several VIPs, he said. *—Salar News*

Through this project inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, nearly 6,657 villages, 27 taluks and 56 Assembly segments will benefit from drinking water **PHOTO: @SIDDARAMAIAH**

CM INAUGURATES 1ST PHASE OF YETTINAHOLE PROJECT

The ₹23,251 crore project is set to be completed by 2027

HASSAN, 6 SEPT

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday inau-gurated the first phase of an ambitious Rs 23,251.66 crore drinking water project at Hebbanahalli in Sakleshapur taluk of the district.

According to officials, 'Yettinahole Integrated Drinking Water Project' is planned to be completed by 31 March, 2027.

"This is a very important programme in the history of Karnataka after Almatti (dam)," Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also Water Resources Minister, told PTI Videos on the occa-sion.

"Through this programme, (Yettinahole project), nearly 6,657 villages, 27 taluks and 56 assembly seg-ments will bene-fit from drinking water. More than 247 taluk tanks will be filled. It is a very prestigious project," he said.

The project envisages lifting of 24.01 TMC of water avail-able during the monsoon from Yettinahole, Kadumane Hole, Keri Hole and Hongada halla coming under western ghats in Sakaleshapura taluk to mit-igate the problem of acute drinking water in drought-prone areas especially in Chikkaballapur and Kolar dis-tricts and other needy areas of Hassan, Ckikkamagaluru, Tumkuru, Ramanagara and Bangalore Rural districts, offi-cials said. *—PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and others during Yettinahole project inaugration at Hebbanahalli in Sakleshapur on Friday **PHOTO: X/@SIDDARAMAIAH**

MEET ON 9 SEPT

Review 18% GST on health insurance: State to Modi

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging a review of the 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) imposed on health insurance premiums. In his letter, Rao highlighted the det-rimental impact of high taxes on the affordability of health insurance, especially for mid-dle- and lower-income fami-lies, who are increasingly staying away from purchasing policies due to the elevated costs.

The GST Council, which is set to meet on 9 September, has been asked to reconsider this tax rate as part of the efforts to ensure broader access to healthcare in India. Rao's appeal comes at a time when the government is push-ing for universal health cover-age by 2047, a target set under the Union gov-ernment's ambitious Ayushman Bharat Yojana. However, the 18 per cent tax is counterproductive to this mission, making premi-ums unaffordable for many, the health minister said.

Rao referenced the State's Aarogya Karnataka Yojana, introduced in 2018, as an example of efforts to promote universal healthcare.

Dinesh Gundu Rao **PHOTO: PTI**

- The GST Council, which is set to meet on 9 September, has been asked to reconsider this tax rate as part of the efforts to ensure broader access to healthcare in India

However, he argued that high taxation undermines these initiatives, es-pecially for those who are already strug-gling economically. The impo-sition of 18 per cent of GST on health insurance, in place since 2017, has made premi-ums more expensive. This has led to a significant drop in the number of people seeking insurance coverage, particu-larly among the economically weaker sections.

—Salar News

Film panel to meet with artistes on 16 Sept

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce has called for a meeting with women artistes to discuss sexual and other abuse prevalent in the indus-try on 16 September, a top office-bearer said on Friday.

The meeting has been con-vened after the Karnataka State Commission for Women asked the Karna-taka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) to do so.

NM Suresh, president of KFCC told PTI, "The State Women's Commission asked us to convene a meet-ing on the 13 September, but because it is festival time, and also because people might be shoot-ing and may need more time to adjust their schedules, we have tentatively called for a meeting on 16 Sep-tember."

According to him, only on Monday, 9 September, they will know for sure when they will be able to hold the meet.

Meanwhile, in a press state-ment issued by Film Industry for Rights & Equality (FIRE) on Friday, it stated: "In response to our justified demand, Karnataka's Women and Child Welfare Minister Lakshmi Heb-balkar has artic-ulated that the Karnataka gov-ernment will take strict action against perpetrators of casting couch."

FIRE, founded by actor Chetan Ahimsa in 2017, which is now being led by film direc-tor, screenwriter and lyricist Kavita Lankesh, has been pushing for reform in the Kannada film industry follow-ing the #metoo wave as well. *—PTI*

OPEN FOR EASE

Service road from Esteem Mall connecting to the flyover towards Bengaluru city is ready for traffic movement **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Uber driver grabs woman's hand over e-payment

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

An Uber driver snatched a woman's phone and grabbed her hand over online payment on Thursday night.

According to the woman's husband, she and a friend of hers booked an Uber auto from Whitefield around 9:30 pm and opted for online pay-ment. After they boarded the auto, the driver insisted they switch to cash or UPI pay-ment, but they were unable to do so.

"She dropped her friend at her stop and reached our apartment gate and informed that payment was done through Uber Money and they couldn't change it to cash," the woman's husband said.

The driver got furious at this, grabbed her hand and later snatched her phone. "Once she started moving towards the gate the auto driv-er just grabbed her hand and started arguing that money hadn't reached him and so on. She kept explaining the pay-ment was done and she even showed the screenshot that the payment had been made. The auto driver got very angry and snatched her phone, she shouted and called the guards," the husband further added. She kept explaining the payment was done and she even showed the screenshot that the payment had been made. The auto driver got very angry and snatched her phone, she shouted and called the guards," the husband fur-ther added.

The woman and her husband then went to the police station and filed an FIR. *—Agencies*

'ONE BILLION DROPS'

5 police campuses to get 590 percolation wells

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Bengaluru City police Commissioner B Dayananda on Friday launched the "One Billion Drops" campaign in five police campuses to strengthen the metropolis' climate resilience.

As part of the "One Billion Drops" project, this year, 590 percolation wells will be constructed across these locations.

The initiative is a joint project of Mphasis, an IT firm and United Way Bengaluru, an NGO focus-ing on health, education, environmental sustainabil-ity, rural development, and corporate volunteer-ing.

The five police campuses chosen for the project include CAR (City Armed Reserve) North, Karnataka State Reserved Police 9th Battalion, Centre for Counter-Terrorism, CAR Headquarters, and KSRP 1st Battalion.

Speaking at the event, the police Commissioner said, "Together, we are not only ensuring a greener future for our personnel and the community but also setting a benchmark for responsi-ble governance."

The "One Billion Drops" initiative addresses cli-mate change-related issues through percolation wells designed to capture rain-water at the point of impact, said Rajesh Krishnan, CEO of United Way Bengaluru. *—PTI*

'CITY SEES 19% RISE IN HOME SALES'

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Bengaluru's residential market continues to display steady growth as registered transactions maintain upward momen-tum both sequentially and annually, a report b y Square Yards, an integrated platform for real estate and mortgages, said on Friday. According to the data, 28,356 transactions were recorded in the city during the second quarter of 2024, marking a 19 per cent increase over the previous quarter. "Despite challeng-es such as flooding and wa-ter shortage, home buyer demand remains notably resilient, under-pinned by a strengthening IT sector and the blend of full-time and hybrid working models," said Sopan Gupta, Princi-pal Partner, Square Yards. *—PTI*

HC quashes case against firm over Tatkal booking

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Karnataka High Court has dis-missed criminal proceedings against an IIT graduate and startup founder, who devel-oped a software tool that sig-nificantly reduced the time required to book railway Tatkal tickets.

Gaurav Dhake, who was charged under Section 143 of the Railways Act for allegedly illegally procuring and dis-tributing railway tickets, saw the case against him quashed by a single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna.

The court ruled that Dhake's creation of a browser exten-sion, which reduced the typi-cal Tatkal booking time from five-seven minutes to just 45 seconds, did not constitute a violation of the Railways Act.

The software tool, which auto-filled the traveler's details to expedite the booking pro-cess on the IRCTC website, was initially offered for free. However, in February 2020, Dhake limited its use to 10 bookings per day to prevent bulk ticketing by agents and began charging Rs 30 per book-ing for "authenticity."

Railways issued a notice to Dhake in September 2020, lead-ing to registration of a crimi-nal case against him. *—PTI*

DUAL THREAT

Garbage, encroachments plague Hosur Cemetery

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Indian Christian Cemetery off Hosur Road is facing a dual threat of rampant garbage dis-posal and encroachment. Piles of waste-transportation trucks line the cemetery's perimeter, creating an unsanitary envi-ronment for people who come to pay their last respects to the departed.

"Whenever there is a funer-al, there is a gathering of 100 to 200 people, but there is no space for parking due to the constant presence of these trucks," an official attached to the cemetery told **Salar News**.

Adding to the woes, the foot-path has been encroached on by units manufacturing cement pots and the area is littered, making it hard for pedestrians to walk and visi-tors to park their vehicles. Opposite the cemetery, a gas agency has permanently parked its trucks and contin-ues to refill and distribute cyl-inders from the same spot.

Representatives of the church have written multiple letters to BBMP over the issue **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Representatives of the church managing the ceme-tery have written multiple let-ters to BBMP, urging them to take immediate action as All Souls' Day (2 November) is around the corner. "Despite repeated complaints to BBMP and police, no action has been taken to address the situa-tion," the church official said.

Santhosh G, Assistant General Manager of Dry Waste Collection Centre of BBMP near the cemetery, told **Salar News** "We have received no such complaints yet. But if we receive it, we will look into the matter." *—Salar News*

Kerala to host inter states conclave to discuss fiscal issues

T'PURAM, 6 SEPT

Kerala government will host an interstate conclave with five opposition-ruled states to discuss their fiscal needs in the upcoming 16th Finance Commission, state Finance Minister KN Balagopal said on Thursday. Besides the left-ruled Kerala, AAP ruled Punjab, DMK governed Tamil Nadu, and the Congress ruled states of Karnataka and Telangana will participate in the conclave.

The move is seen as an effort from the five opposition states to demand more funds from the NDA led central govern-ment. Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal said that the conclave will be inaugurated on 12 September by Chief Minister Pinatayi Vijayan, and the state opposition leader will also participate in that meeting.

"The states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, and Punjab finance ministers are attending the conclave, KN Balagopal added.

Additionally, state Finance Ministers and Finance secre-taries of five participating states will also take part in the conlave informed KN Balagopal. There will be detailed discussions about the different aspects of the finance commission in this conclave.

He asserted that this will be one of the important events in recent days because the 16th Finance Commission will be going to complete the meet-ings and prepare the reports next year.

"States have different opin-ions about the important issues. This is very important for the health of fiscal federal-ism," he added.

Notably, the 16th Finance Commission was constituted by the President on 31st December 2023 with Arvind Panagariya as Chairman. The commission has already start-ed consultations and discus-sions to get the feed and to discuss the memorandum of the states.

The chairman and members are visiting the states, and the commission will be visiting Kerala in the month of December. *—ANI*

Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: PTI

Yechury's health is stable and improving: CPI(M)

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury, who is under treatment for a severe lung infection at the Delhi AIIMS, is stable and showing a positive response to treatment, the party said on Friday. "Comrade Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist), has been under treatment in the intensive care unit of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. He is being treated for a severe lung infection," the CPI(M) said. "There is a positive response to the treatment. Comrade Sitaram's condition is stable," it added. Yechury, 72, was admitted to the AIIMS on August 19 for treatment of a pneumonia-like chest infection. *—PTI*

TDP suspends MLA for sexually harassing woman

AMARAVATI, 6 SEPT

Telugu Desam Party State president P Srinivas Rao has suspended party MLA, K Adimulam, over allegations of sexually harassing a woman. Adimulam represents the SC-reserved Satyavedu assembly constituency. "On allegations emerging on various fora that Koneti Adimulam (Satyavedu MLA) sexually harassed a woman, the party (TDP) took severe note of these allegations and suspended him from the party," said a TDP release on Thursday. The woman held a press conference at Somajiguda Press Club in Hyderabad o and levelled the allegations, adding that she caught him on camera. *—PTI*

SC junks PIL for regulating exit polls

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday junked a PIL seeking to regulate exit polls for its alleged impact on election results, saying "let us get on with governance in the country" and close this "saga". Terming the public interest litigation (PIL) as a "political interest litigation", a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra dismissed the plea filed by BL Jain. "The government is already elected now. Let us now close the saga of what happens during elections and let us now get on with governance in the country," the CJI said. The bench said the poll panel is competent to handle the issue and it cannot run the Election Commission. "This is a political interest litigation... Dismissed," it said. Jain, in his PIL, had made several poll-surveying agencies and news channels as parties. *—PTI*

BJP worker booked for casteist remarks in Thane

THANE, 6 SEPT

The police have registered two cases against a BJP worker Vijay Tripathi and some other accused for allegedly outraging the modesty of a woman and passing casteist remarks at a temple in Maharashtra's Thane city, an official said on Friday. The incidents occurred during a meeting convened by local leaders at a temple to review preparations for the Ganesha Chaturthi festival, he said. A case has been registered against Tripathi and three others under sections 74 (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 298 (injuring or defiling a place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) and other relevant provisions of the BNS. The accused entered a temple with footwear to attend a meeting for the celebrations on Wednesday, and when a woman objected to this, they touched her inappropriately. *—PTI*

Wrestlers Vinesh, Bajrang join Congress; vow to not 'back off'

Vinesh says BJP supported Brij while Cong helped wrestlers

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Olympians Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against then WFI chief and former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, entered the political arena on Friday by joining the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off".

Phogat and Punia met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence and later joined the party at the AICC headquarters in the presence of Congress general secretary in-charge organisation KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary in-charge Haryana Deepak Babaria, Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan and the party's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera.

Both Phogat and Punia or at least one are set to contest the assembly polls in Haryana on a Congress ticket, the sources said.

The Julana seat is being considered for Phogat, they added.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia with AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal and Vinesh Phogat at Congress headquarters in New Delhi on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

At the press conference during which they joined the party, Venugopal claimed that Phogat received a showcause notice from the Railways after she met Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Party sources said the notice talked about violating service rules by meeting political leaders.

Venugopal asked if it was a crime to meet the leader of the opposition and urged the Railway authorities to relieve Phogat and not "play politics".

Without elaborating, Venugopal claimed Punia had also got a notice.

Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways, citing personal reasons. On whether Phogat and Punia would contest the assembly polls, Venugopal said the party's Central Election Committee would decide on that. After joining party, Phogat said the BJP was supporting Singh while the Congress supported the protesting wrestlers when they "were being dragged on the roads" in Delhi.

Punia and Phogat were part of the protest over sexual harassment allegations against former BJP MP and then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) Chief Singh in 2023.

She said she felt proud that she was with a party and an ideology that stood against injustice on women and was ready to fight the battle from the streets to Parliament.

Phogat said they would be among the people and ensure their welfare. She said she would like to tell the women that she was standing with them and that the Congress was standing with them, whenever they faced any problem.

Punia said the Congress stood with them during their tough times. *—PTI*

KOLKATA RAPE HORROR

SC bins Ghosh's plea for adding him as party in graft case

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by former principal of Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh challenging a Calcutta High Court order rejecting his petition to be added as a party to a case of alleged financial irregularities at the institute on his watch. The High Court had on 23 August transferred the probe into the alleged financial irregularities from SIT to the CBI.

One detained in ED raids

Meanwhile, ED on Friday detained Prasun Chattopadhyay, a known associate of Ghosh, in connection with alleged financial irregularities at the latter institution, an officer said.

Chattopadhyay, was also spotted amid the crowd from the purported 9 August video at the RG Kar hospital seminar hall crime scene where the murdered trainee doctor's body was discovered. *—PTI*

BJP holds statewide 'chakka jam'

The West Bengal BJP on Friday organised a statewide "Chakka jam" (road blockade) programme in the city demanding justice for rape and murder case and also the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Meanwhile, student and women's wings of the CPI(M) held an impromptu sit-in at Howrah, after the police stopped their procession to the health department's office, demanding justice. *—PTI*

IPS row: Congress protests, demands Vijayan's resignation

T'PURAM, 6 SEPT

The Opposition Congress in Kerala on Friday took out a protest march to the Secretariat here demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in connection with the allegations by LDF MLA PV Anvar against some top IPS officers in the State.

Hundreds of Congress members, workers and supporters, led by Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief K Sudhakaran, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly VD Satheesan and AICC general secretary in-charge of Kerala Deepa Dasmunsi marched to the Secretariat carrying party flags.

As the protestors reached the Secretariat, they shouted slogans against the ruling Left government and the Chief Minister and demanded his resignation.

Sudhakaran alleged that the State was in dire straits under the Pinarayi Vijayan led-government for the past eight years.

He said the law and order situation was poor as 1.3 lakh FIRs were lodged in the last eight years in the State in connection with the sexual assault of women.

Kerala Congress workers protest in front demanding the resignation of CM Pinarayi Vijayan, in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

He also referred to the lathicharge of the Youth Congress activists a day ago by the police near the Secretariat, saying that they were brutally beaten up for no reason.

Youth Congress state president Abin Varkey was surrounded by police personnel and brutally beaten leading to serious injuries to his head, according to visuals on TV channels on Thursday.

Putting the CPI (M)-led government in a spot, Nilambur legislator Anvar on Sunday had accused Vijayan's political secretary P Sasi and ADGP (Law and Order) Ajithkumar of breaching trust and failing to discharge their duties honestly.

He had alleged that Kumar tapped ministers' phone conversations, had links with gold smuggling rackets and was involved in serious crimes. *—PTI*

STRENGTHENING TIES

Vaishnaw in Japan: Focus on cooperation in Rlwys, IT

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw discussed further enhancing cooperation with Japan in the field of railways, innovation in the digital landscape and focusing on futuristic technological advancements during his visit to Tokyo.

Vaishnaw, who holds the portfolios of railways, information and broadcasting, and information technology and electronics, held productive discussions with Tetsuo Saito, Japan's minister of land, infrastructure, transport and tourism on enhancing India-Japan cooperation.

Vaishnaw said he discussed enhancing railway cooperation, promoting economic growth and deepening cultural ties with Saito. The meeting with Saito took place on Thursday.

"Met with Tadashi Maeda, MD & Chairman of Japan Bank for International Cooperation, to discuss progress under the India-Japan strategic partnership.

Ashwini Vaishnaw *PHOTO: PTI*

Exchanged views on key areas of cooperation and future opportunities," he posted on X on Friday. Vaishnaw also met Taro Kono, the minister for digital transformation of Japan, to discuss strengthening India-Japan digital ties.

"Explored avenues for collaboration and innovation in the digital landscape, focusing on futuristic technological advancements," he said.

Vaishnaw said he also met Masafumi Mori, special adviser to Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, f or a comprehensive discussion on the current state and future trajectory of the India-Japan strategic partnership. *—PTI*

MP Congress to protest on 20 Sept for MSP hike

BHOPAL, 6 SEPT

Congress will hold a protest on 20 September across Madhya Pradesh seeking hike in minimum support price (MSP) for agricultural produce, the party's State unit chief Jitu Patwari said on Friday.

Offices of collectors of the all the 55 districts in the State will be "gheraod" (encircled) at 12 noon that day under Congress' 'Kisan Nyay Yatra'. Patwari told reporters.

"The farmers across India are in distress. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union agricultural Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan speak about doubling farmers' income but the condition of cultivators is going from bad to worse. We want the state government to procure soybean from farmers at Rs 6,000 per quintal, wheat at Rs 2,700 per quintal and paddy at Rs 3,100," he said.

BJP, in its manifesto for the State Assembly polls last year, promised MSP of Rs 2700 for wheat and Rs 3,100 for paddy but these have been forgotten by the party after it retained power, he said. *—PTI*

Centre grants projects worth ₹400cr to Sikkim

GANGTOK, 6 SEPT

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Friday said the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) has sanctioned various projects worth Rs 400 crore for the Himalayan state.

Tamang thanked the visiting Union DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia for sanctioning various projects for Sikkim which, he said will fast track development activities in the state.

Tamang said the new projects will boost infrastructure and speed up the development of the Himalayan state.

Scindia said that the Union DoNER Ministry considered various projects forwarded to the ministry by the Sikkim government and sanctioned Rs 170 crore for setting up a new medical college in the state, Rs 150 crore for procurement of medical equipment for Namchi district hospital and Rs 6 crore for upgrading Mangan district hospital.

He said that the Central government was committed to boost healthcare infrastructure in Sikkim so that the people could get the best medical facilities in their own state.

"The sanction of various projects will cater to the needs of the people in all parts of the state," the Union minister said. The Union DoNER minister arrived in Gangtok on Thursday evening.

Earlier in the day, Scindia had a detailed discussion with the Sikkim chief minister on the issues related to the development of the State. *—PTI*

'JAL SANCHAY JAN BHAGIDARI'

Conservation of water, environment part of cultural consciousness, says PM

GANGTOK, 6 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called the conservation of water and environment a part of India's cultural consciousness, pitching for the "reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle" mantra to save water.

He was virtually speaking at a programme marking the launch of the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative in Surat, a step aimed at strengthening community involvement in water conservation.

"For water conservation, we have to work on the mantra of 'reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle'. We also need to adopt innovative techniques and the latest technology to conserve water," said the Prime Minister.

Narendra Modi *PHOTO: PTI*

Modi said India has just four per cent of freshwater resources, and many parts of the country face a water crisis.

Stressing the need to save water, he said water and environment conservation is part of India's cultural consciousness.

The Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative aligns with the ongoing "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign, reinforcing Modi's vision of collaborative water management to ensure long-term water security, according to an official statement.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea seeking injunction against the BJP and restrain it from using 'kamal' or lotus as the party symbol.

"You want name and fame for yourself. Look at the plea, what is the kind of relief claimed by you? Dismissed," the bench said. *—PTI*

Sena, NCP spar over omission of CM's name in ads

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

Fissures have emerged in Maharashtra's ruling Mahayuti over the 'Ladki Bahin Yojana' with a Shiv Sena minister raising objection against ally NCP and its president Ajit Pawar for "omitting" Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's name from advertisements and promotional material of the scheme.

Excise Minister Shambhuraj Desai, who belongs to the Shiv Sena led by CM Shinde, expressed disappointment over the Deputy CM Pawar virtually "hijacking" the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme, which offers a financial assistance of Rs 1,500 per month to eligible women in the state. *—PTI*

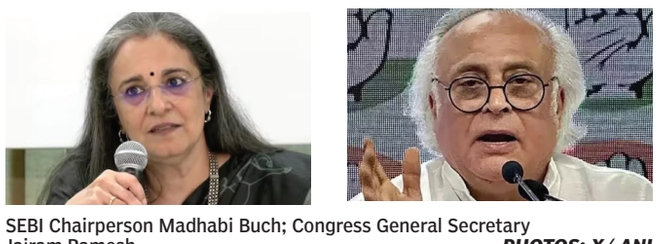
SEBI UNDER FIRE

Buch got ₹2.16cr from firm under probe: Cong

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Levelling more conflict of interest allegations against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Madhabi Buch, Congress on Friday claimed that she received rental income of Rs 2.16 crore from "Carol Info Services Limited" affiliated company affiliated to Wockhardt Limited that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases, including that of insider trading in 2023.

Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the question really had to be asked of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and no one else on how much more evidence was needed to show the collapse of transparency and integrity, as far as the capital markets regulator was concerned.



SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch; Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh *PHOTOS: X/ ANI*

"By the NSE's data, there are now 10 crore Indians with unique PANs who have some form of investment in this market. Don't they deserve better? Why does he not move? What is he afraid of?" Ramesh said on X. Khera asserted that this was an outright case of corruption that invoked conflict of interest, violating sections 4, 7 and 8 of SEBI's 2008 code on conflict of interests for members of its board.

Previous SEBI chairpersons went to great lengths to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, both in their roles at SEBI and in their earlier positions, he pointed out.

He asked why there was no effort to verify whether Buch would follow these standards.

Khera said he was challenging Buch to come out and deny the charges against her.

Congress had on Thursday demanded an independent inquiry into the matter, asserting that it was in the national interest to have a probe as foreign investors were getting concerned and there were doubts about the integrity of India's stock markets. Congress on Monday also levelled conflict of interest allegations against Buch and asked Modi to come clean as the head of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on her appointment. Congress had said the Supreme Court should take cognisance of these fresh revelations and demanded that the SEBI chairperson be dismissed immediately.

Buch had denied the allegations as baseless and asserted that their finances were an open book. *—PTI*

Ex- BJD MP joins BJP, says impressed by PM

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Former Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar joined the BJP in the presence of senior party leaders on Friday.

The move came after the BJD expelled Kumar for anti-party activities earlier in the day. He subsequently resigned his Rajya Sabha membership.

Kumar joined the BJP in the presence of Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, the party's Odisha in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar, MP Bhartruhari Mahtab and other leaders.

The BJP's chief spokesperson Anil Baluni, a Rajya Sabha member, was also present.

Kumar said he joined the saffron party as he was impressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's work and his vision for making India a developed country by 2047 and Odisha a developed State by 2036.

"For me, country is first and foremost. Nation first has always been my philosophy. I lived abroad for many years and worked for organisations such as the UN (United Nations) and the World Economic Forum. I returned to India in 2011 to contribute to the development of my country," he said.

Expressing his happiness at joining the BJP, Kumar thanked party chief JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other leaders.

Welcoming Kumar into the BJP fold, Union minister Pradhan said, "I am confident that he will contribute to fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of making India a developed country." *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Boy injured in fresh wolf attack in UP's Bahraich

BAHRAICH, 6 SEPT

An eight-year-old boy was injured in a wolf attack while playing outside his home in the Mahsi tehsil here, his family alleged on Friday. The boy has suffered injuries, including some on his face, and has been hospitalized, a government doctor said. In the last two months, Bahraich district has recorded eight deaths, including seven children in a series of attacks by wolves while around three dozen other people were left injured, according to official figures. The attacks increased from 17 July during the rainy season and a total of eight people, including seven children, have died due to these attacks. Experts believe that the real man-eaters have not caught yet. *—PTI*

'Emergency' dates to be announced soon: Kangana

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut on Friday said her directorial debut movie "Emergency" has been postponed and a new release date will be announced soon. The political period drama, also written and co-produced by Ranaut, was scheduled to hit theatres across the country on Friday but the makers are yet to get a clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and the matter is currently in court. "With a heavy heart I announce that my directorial 'Emergency' has been postponed, we are still waiting for the certification from censor board, new release date will be announced soon, thanks for your understanding and patience," Ranaut, the BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, said in a post on X. . On Wednesday, the Bombay High Court had refused to grant any urgent relief. *—PTI*

HC denies bail to officer's wife in minor rape case

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Delhi High Court on Friday refused to grant bail to the wife of suspended Delhi government officer Premoday Khakha, who allegedly raped a minor girl several times and impregnated her. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma dismissed the bail application of Seema Rani Khakha, saying the case "strikes at the root of trust between two families" and the possibility of influencing witnesses can't be ruled out at this stage. Premoday Khakha has been accused of allegedly raping a minor girl several times between November 2020 and January 2021 and is currently in judicial custody after being arrested in August 2023. The minor was the daughter of a person known to the accused, according to police. *—PTI*

3 pilgrims die after train runs over them in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, 6 SEPT

Three people, on a religious pilgrimage, were killed after they were run over by a train in Rajasthan's Karauli district, police said Friday. Shyam, 14, Darshan alias Kalu, 41 and Tarun, 31, were hit by the Delhi-Indore Superfast Express near Neemoda station of Sapotra subdivision on Thursday night, Narauli Dang Station House Officer (SHO) Abjeet Kumar said. The loco pilot informed the Neemoda station master about the incident, Kumar said, adding that the trio was going on a 'padyatra' (religious pilgrimage) from Gangapur to a temple in Ranthambore. According to Kumar, they were walking on the railway track because of waterlogging at various places due to rain. The victims were from Harijan Basti in Gangapur city and their families were informed on Friday morning, said. *—PTI*

'Over 85% of districts at risk from climate extremes'

Flood-prone areas are becoming susceptible to droughts, vice versa

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

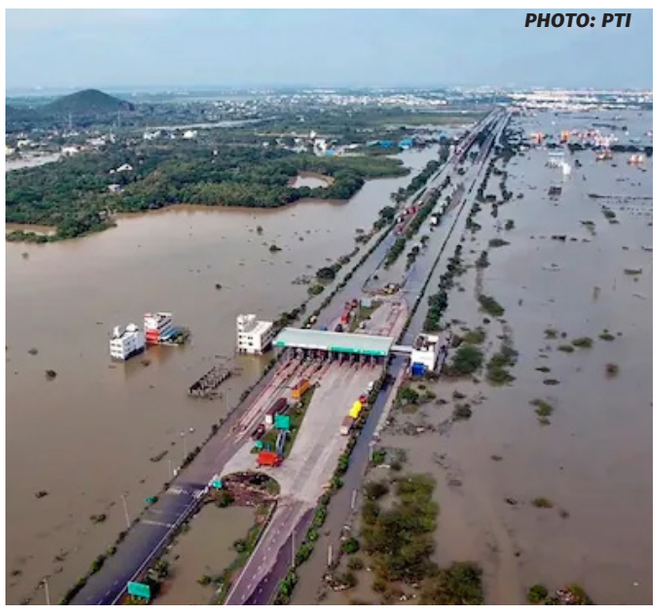


PHOTO: PTI

More than 85 per cent of districts in India are exposed to extreme climate events such as floods, droughts and cyclones, according to a new study.

The study by IPE Global and Esri India also found that 45 per cent of the districts were experiencing a "swapping" trend, where traditionally flood-prone areas were becoming drought-prone and vice versa.

Using a penta-decadal analysis, the study compiled a catalogue of extreme climate events during a 50-year period from 1973 to 2023, employing spatial and temporal modelling.

The last decade alone saw a five-fold increase in these climate extremes, with a four-fold increase in extreme flood events, it said.

Districts in eastern India are more prone to extreme flood events, followed closely by the country's northeastern and southern parts.

The study also shows there has been a two-fold increase in drought events, especially agricultural and meteorological droughts, and a four-fold increase in cyclone events.

It found that more than 60 per cent of districts in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Assam were experiencing more than one extreme climate event.

- The study also shows there has been a two-fold increase in drought events, especially agricultural and meteorological droughts, and a four-fold increase in cyclone events

The study revealed that more than 45 per cent of districts were experiencing a swapping trend, ie, some flood-prone districts were becoming more susceptible to droughts and vice versa.

The number of districts that have transitioned from experiencing floods to facing droughts surpassed those that have shifted from droughts to floods. *—PTI*

80% SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE ACTIONS

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Nearly four out of five Indians support criminalising actions by government officials or leaders of large businesses that cause serious damage to nature and the climate, according to a new global survey.

The Global Commons Survey 2024, conducted by Ipsos UK and commissioned by Earth4All and the Global Commons Alliance (GCA), also revealed that nearly three out of five (61 per cent) Indians believe that the government is doing enough to tackle climate change and environmental damage.

Ninety per cent of them are worried about the state of nature today.

The survey included responses from 1,000 participants aged 18 to 75 across 18 G20 countries -- Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States – and four non-G20 countries -- Austria, Denmark, Kenya and Sweden. *—PTI*

'AGRI POLICY PROMISE'

Punjab farmers end protest after CM's assurance

CHANDIGARH, 6 SEPT

Bhagwant Singh Mann *PHOTO: PTI*

Farmers protesting against the alleged delay in implementation of Punjab's new agriculture policy ended their strike on Friday, a day after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann assured them that a draft of the policy would be shared with them by 30 September.

Mann also assured them that their suggestions would be incorporated before the policy's implementation.

Mann on Thursday held an over two-hour meeting with leaders of the Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) and Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union, which led the protesting farmers, to discuss their demands.

Farmers under the banner of the Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) and the Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union began a five-day protest on Sunday to press for their demands, including the agriculture policy's implementation.

Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said they had urged the State government to make the agriculture policy public.

"We will wait till 30 September. After we get a copy of the policy, we will go through it and hold a big meeting and decide the next course of action," he added.

- Farmers under the banner of the Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) and the Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union began a five-day protest on Sunday to press for their demands

In the interim, "we have decided to end the protest in Chandigarh at 2 pm", Ugrahan said.

The farmers' other demands included the promotion of chemical-free crops, compensation to the families of farmers who committed suicide, and curbing the drugs problem in the state, Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union general secretary Lachhman Singh Sewewala had earlier said. *—PTI*

AMID PROTEST

Waqf board takes over 'illegal' Shimla mosque

SHIMLA, 6 SEPT

Amid the ongoing protest over the 'illegal' construction of Sanjauli mosque in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla, the Waqf Board on Friday took action in connection to the row and has taken the entire mosque under its control. Waqf Board further acknowledged that the floors of the mosque were constructed 'illegally'.

In addition to this, Shimla Waqf Board state officer Qutubuddin informed that the Imam posted in the mosque has also been removed. The Board's action came after massive protest erupted outside the Sanjauli Masjid in Shimla with members of BJP, various Hindu organisations and local residents demanding the demolition of the Masjid, what they allege to be "illegal".

Muslim body also removed other illegal encroachments done by several people belonging to the Muslim community from outside the state. In view of the ongoing row, the Waqf Board completely banned any outsider from staying in the mosque.

The massive controversy over the mosque intensified on Wednesday after a heated debate in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly, where minister and Congress leader Anirudh Singh demanded an investigation into the illegal construction of Shimla's Sanjauli Masjid, highlighting that it is leading to tensions in the area. Singh's allegations, however, were countered by his party MLAs.

—Agencies

Heavy rains continue in Andhra, R'than & Delhi

JAIPUR/DELHI/ANDHRA, 6 SEPT

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu stands on a bridge even as a train passes near him during flood inspection; Union Agricultural Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan visits flood-hit areas *PHOTO: PTI*

Heavy rain battered many places in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district while two gates of the Bisalpur dam in neighbouring Tonk district were opened on Friday following sufficient water inflow.

The Met office in Jaipur said rain and thunder were recorded at some places in western Rajasthan and many places in eastern Rajasthan in the 24 hours ended at 8:30 am on Friday.

On Friday, two gates of the Bisalpur dam, the main source of drinking water in Ajmer and Tonk districts and the state capital Jaipur, were opened.

Delhi

For Delhiites the day began with heavy rain, leading to severe waterlogging and widespread traffic disruptions.

Children heading to school were seen trying not to get wet in the rain.

Andhra Pradesh

The Engineering Task Force of the Indian Army has arrived here and is working on war footing to close the breaches of Budameru, a rivulet in Vijayawada, which wreaked havoc in the city with floods, the state government said on Friday.

Two breaches have been closed and the most difficult third breach is being worked on by the task force, along with the state government machinery. *—PTI/ANI*

Human chain rally held in Imphal over drone attacks

IMPHAL, 6 SEPT

Thousands of people across five districts of Imphal Valley on Friday took part in a series of human chain rallies to protest the recent drone and gun attacks in Manipur that resulted in two civilian deaths and 12 injuries.

Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the ongoing conflict in the state.

Organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), the rally saw school and college students in uniform, as well as women from various localities, lining up along roadsides in Thoubal Bazar, Lilong Chajing in Thoubal district, and Sekmai, Kwakeithel, Singjamei in Imphal West district raising slogans condemning the recent attacks in Koutruk and Senjam Chirang.

Protesters carried placards with messages such as 'Drone bombing is an act of terrorism,' 'We condemn Manipur government's timidity,' 'Take action against Kuki terrorists,''Manipur's territorial and administrative integrity cannot be compromised,' and 'We want peace; save Manipur,' among others.

During the protest, major markets were closed, and vehicles remained off the roads. *—PTI*

TIMES TOWER IN FLAMES

Smoke and flame out after a fire broke out at Times Tower building in Kamala Mill compound, in Mumbai, on Friday. No casualties were reported as per official sources *PHOTO: PTI*

SC stays NGT's order over pollution in Ganga

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directing criminal prosecution and punitive action against Uttarakhand government officials for failure to prevent the discharge of untreated sewage into the Ganga.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the Centre and posted the matter for hearing in the second week of December.

The NGT on 9 February had deprecated the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board for remaining a "silent spectator" and not taking proper action to prevent the discharge of untreated sewage into the Ganga.

In a 151-page order, the tribunal had directed the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) to take punitive action against responsible government officers and heads of departments by initiating criminal proceedings.

"UKPCB shall also recover Environmental Compensation (EC) for the past violation and will compute and impose environmental compensation for future violations It shall submit a compliance report within two months," it said. *—PTI*

SOAP MINING BLAMED

U'khand homes develop cracks, people fume

PITHORAGARH, 6 SEPT

Houses in Bageshwar villages develop cracks, villagers blame soapstone mining in Uttarakhand *PHOTO: ANI*

Cracks similar to those in Joshimath have appeared on the walls and ceilings of houses in more than two dozen villages of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, sending residents in a state of alarm.

Locals attributed land subsidence, which had aggravated with time, to large-scale soapstone mining in the area and excavated ditches being left untreated by contractors, who often violated mining norms by blasting and using heavy machinery for digging.

"Despite mining being stopped in the area two years ago, we found at least seven to eight houses in Kanda village with cracks still appearing on the walls and ceilings," said District Mining Officer Jigyasa Bisht, who visited the village on September 3 along with a geologist and revenue officials.

Around 1,000 people had to leave their homes in Joshimath, recently renamed Jyotirmath, in early 2023 when large cracks appeared on the walls and floors due to land subsidence.

Cracks have also appeared in houses in more than 25 villages adjacent to the areas where mining is still going on in the district, the officer said.

Residents of Kolkata protest over repeated cracks, water leakage

Residents of Durga Pituri Lane in the city's Bowbazar area on Friday engaged in a verbal duel with Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRCL) officials over persistent cracks and water leaks in local buildings, which they allege have been caused by drilling operations.

KMRCL evacuated 52 people and relocated them on Thursday night to local hotels as a precautionary measure. This action followed reports of underground water leak during tunnel drilling east-west Metro corridor. *—PTI*

Bollywood's Shilpa alleges sexual assault

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Shilpa Shinde *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Ever since the findings of the Justice Hema Committee Report were made public, several actors have come forward with shocking stories of sexual assault and harassment in the Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu film industries. Now, actress Shilpa Shinde has alleged that she was sexually assaulted by a Hindi filmmaker during the early days of her career.

In an exclusive conversation with News18 Showsha, Shilpa Shinde claimed that she was once asked to seduce a filmmaker under the guise of an audition.

"It was during my struggling days, around 1998-99. I cannot take names, but they told me, 'Aap yeh kapde pehno aur yeh scene karo' (wear these clothes and do this scene). I didn't wear those clothes. In the scene, he told me he was my boss, and I had to seduce him. I was very innocent then, so I did the scene. That person tried to force himself on me, and I got so scared. I pushed him away and ran out. The security staff realised what had happened and asked me to leave immediately. They thought I would make a scene and call for help." *—Agencies*

REFUGE FROM RAIN

Residents protect their belongings as they negotiate a flooded street caused by heavy rains from Tropical Storm Yagi, locally called Enteng, in Cainta, Rizal province, Philippines. Yagi, Asia's strongest storm this year, killed 14 people in Philippines. The storm made its landfall along the coast of China's Hainan province on Friday. Some 4,00,000 people in Hainan island were evacuated to safe ground ahead of Yagi's arrival ***PHOTO: PTI***

INDIA EYES DIGITAL LAW TO REIN IN TECH GIANTS

In August, a US court in Washington, DC ruled that Google violated antitrust laws and spent billions of dollars to become an illegal monopoly and maintain domination in web search and advertising markets. The landmark US ruling targeting the tech giant's dominance has given impetus to calls from startups and tech companies for similar action in India.

The Alliance of Digital India Foundation (ADIF), an interest group representing the South Asian nation's digital startups, has filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India (CCI). It said Google's control over major online platforms, coupled with the fact that it derives 97per cent of its revenue from advertising, has stifled competition and adversely affected Indian businesses.

"These actions by Google have an adverse effect. We need a level playing field. This step by us is important to safeguard the market that operates on principles of fairness and transparency," Prateek Jain, associate director of ADIF, told D

Last year, Google deleted Indian apps, including matrimony.com, from its Play Store ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

India eyes Digital Competition Bill

The CCI, India's competition regulator, is currently examining a draft Digital Competition Bill to complement existing antitrust laws.

The draft bill aims to prevent anti-competitive practices and allows for heavy penalties in case of violations. It also aims to force tech companies to make fundamental changes.

"We will have to see how this shapes up and are carefully deliberating. We could see increased preemptive compliance on the part of large tech companies," a senior government official told DW on condition of anonymity.

Last year, the government constituted a Committee on Digital Competition Law to examine the "need for a separate law on competition in digital markets."

The draft bill currently identifies 10 "core digital services" such as online search, social networking and video sharing.

Strengthening India's digital startups

"No monopoly is permanent. In today's cyber world, every monopoly is likely to be scrutinized with microscopic attention by competition regulators to ensure the freeing of the digital market ecosystem from monopolistic shackles," Pavan Duggal, a cyberlaw expert, told DW.

"Since India is contemplating new digital competition laws aimed at regulating tech giants, the outcomes of international cases could trigger more stringent scrutiny and regulatory measures against companies like Google in the Indian market," he added.

The CCI has previously ruled against Google to prevent monopolistic practices in the Indian market. In 2022, it was fined over 13 billion Indian rupees (₹139 million/$154 million) for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets with its Android mobile operating system.

This case was similar to the one Google faced in Europe, where regulators imposed a $5 billion fine on the company in 2018 for abusing its Android market dominance in three key areas.

Murugavel Janakiraman, the founder and CEO of the Chennai-based matrimony.com, a network of matchmaking services, is hopeful that the new digital law will rein in big tech companies, especially when commercial app developers are forced to accept Google policy.

Last year, Google deleted popular Indian apps, including matrimony.com, from its Play Store, citing Google Play's billing system. However, Janakiraman obtained an injunction against the tech major in the Madras High Court. "We cannot have this monopoly behaviour. We also went to the CCI, which levied a penalty against Google," Janakiraman told DW.

One section of the industry believes that the government must think beyond legal measures and force Google to create a separate legal entity entirely located within India.

Levelling the playing field

Divyanshu Shukla, CEO and co-founder of PapSwap, a start-up committed to citizen-centric governance, told DW that CCI's role will be crucial in navigating these complexities to balance market dynamics and safeguard consumer interests in India's burgeoning digital economy.

He pointed out that tech innovations can compete on the global stage by integrating global tech giants within the Indian legal framework, fostering competition, innovation and fair market practices that support both domestic and international growth.

"An Indian app store, though seemingly a solution, may fall short of addressing the issue fully as it could miss out on global tech innovations and opportunities," said Shukla.

"Instead, the focus should be on ensuring that global tech companies operate under Indian laws with a localised presence that aligns with India's regulatory framework. This approach would ease some of the burdens but still requires significant progress," he added. Shrijay Sheth, founder of LegalWiz.in, a consultancy firm, said Google is close to a monopolistic position in India and is required to establish some level of accountability through regulations for the share of the market they hold alone. "Several businesses have raised concerns around ranking fairness for ads, account suspension, stretched timelines to get back to 'compliant' status and material impact on business and, in some cases, almost losing all sales," Sheth told DW.

"This is an alarming level of control for one business to hold for the overall global trade."

India's digital market potential

According to various industry estimates, India will soon have over 1 billion internet users in a few years.

As digital advertising spending grows, industry leaders believe it is imperative to address market imbalances promptly. "ADIF's complaint against Google embodies and symbolizes broader concerns about market fairness and competition in the Indian digital advertising landscape, and the recent US ruling could play a significant role in determining how and in which particular manner CCI is likely to move in this direction," said cyberlaw expert Duggal.

—DW News

SALAR ساہر

Ukraine war dashes hope in India's 'Diamond City'

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, residents of Surat could not have imagined that a war thousands of miles away would lead to a suicide problem in their community.

Surat — a city Gujarat — is the hub of India's diamond industry, which employs over 6.00,000 people.

Workers in Surat are responsible for cutting and polishing 80per cent of the world's diamonds, according to industry statistics.

Surat's diamond industry was already facing many problems — floods in Africa, falling demand from the West, stuttering exports to China — when the war began in February 2022.

What followed was a massive wave of Western sanctions against Russia, which also included Russian diamonds, and Surat was suddenly facing a deep financial crisis.

How is the war in Ukraine causing the financial crisis in Surat?

Russia's invasion prompted the European Union and G7 to ban imports of Russian diamonds via third countries, severely limiting access to key raw material used by India's diamond industry. When the ban came into effect on March 2022, it cut off nearly a third of India's diamond revenue.

At least 63 diamond polishers have committed suicide in Surat in the past 16 months. Several left suicide notes blaming financial distress, according to local media reports. Many thousands of others have lost their jobs or are facing staggering salary cuts.

"Over 30per cent of India's raw material supply came from Russia's Alrosa mine," said Dinesh Navadiya, regional chairman of the Gem and Jewelry Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) which was formed under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. "That lost business still hasn't recovered," he told DW.

Jagdish Khunt, president of Surat's diamond traders association, has a similarly bleak perspective.

"From the first bombardment of the Russia-Ukraine war, things have only worsened for us," he said.

India's sellers have too many diamonds

India's export of cut and polished diamonds fell 27.6 per cent in the financial year 2023-24, with significant cuts from its top three customers — the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates.

As a result, companies have been sitting on stock that is about three times larger than what they usually have, Navadiya said.

"Credit lines have started drying up and business owners are often forced to sell some stock at fraction of the rates, just to remain operational," he said.

Diamond polishers cry out for help

Ramesh Zilariya, head of the Gujarat diamond workers union, spends a considerable part of his time answering calls to a suicide helpline number they launched on July 15.

"We have received over 1,600 calls for help since we launched his number."

One such call still haunts him. "It was a diamond polisher standing at the edge of the road," Zilariya said. The man had been unemployed for four months, couldn't pay rent or even his child's school fees and was Rs 5,00,000 in debt. His debtors had grown aggressive.

"He said he's tired and wants to commit suicide," Zilariya said, whose office rescued the man.

"He cried in our office the entire day. Eventually we found a house on rent for his family, paid the deposit and first month's rent, his children's school fees and found jobs for the husband and wife outside the diamond industry," he said. However, not everyone can be helped financially, he said. "We try to find jobs for the rest but all they know is diamond polishing."

Companies cut hours, drop salaries

Manoj, a 45-year-old diamond polisher from Surat, was also let go in May after three decades of work.

He eventually found a job delivering parcels for courier companies. His salary is low and the employer is not reimbursing him for fuel expenses.

The sole earner in a family of six, he is now two months behind rent, has not been able to pay his older child's school fees and has mortgaged his wife's mangalsutra (a gold wedding chain held sacred by Hindu women), earrings and a gold ring. "I cannot express how we're making ends meet," he told DW.

Neither the government nor the diamond workers union have full data on how many people lost their jobs, since parts of the diamond industry, like many others in India, operate informally.

"We tried to do a survey by sending out Google forms but most of them don't know how to operate such technology," Zilariya said.

The union chief estimated that at least 50,000 polishers had lost their jobs in the last six months and hundreds of thousands over the last 18 months. Those fortunate enough to still have a job are facing severe salary cuts. GJEPC's Navadiya said that many companies have shifted to a four-day work week to save money. They have also cut down work hours per day.

"They want to ensure more people have some work to do but it has resulted in a 30-40per cent cut in salaries. Someone who was earning 40,000 rupees is now only earning 23,000 per month," Navadiya said.

—DW News

Many artisans were forced to look for jobs outside diamond industry with little or no skills ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

To save tigers, India could take people's help instead of relocating them

British colonialism turned India's tigers into trophies. Between 1860 and 1950, more than 65,000 were shot for their skins. The fortunes of the Bengal tiger, one of Earth's biggest species of big cat, did not markedly improve post-independence. The hunting of tigers – and the animals they eat, like deer and wild pigs – continued, while large tracts of their forest habitat became farmland.

India established Project Tiger in 1972 when there were fewer than 2,000 tigers remaining; it is now one of the world's longest-running conservation programmes. The project aimed to protect and increase tiger numbers by creating reserves from existing protected areas like national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Part of that process has involved forcing people to relocate.

In protected areas globally, nature conservationists can find themselves at odds with the needs of local communities. Some scientists have argued that, in order for them to thrive, tigers need forests that are completely free of people who might otherwise graze livestock or collect firewood. In a few documented cases, the tiger population has indeed recovered once people were removed from tiger reserves.

But in pitting people against wildlife, relocations foster bigger problems that do not serve the long-term interests of conservation.

India's relocation policy

Under Project Tiger, 27 tiger reserves were established by 2005, each spanning somewhere between 500 and 2,500 square kilometres. Tiger reserves have a core in which people are prevented from grazing livestock, hunting wildlife and collecting wood, leaves and flowers. A buffer zone encircles this. Here, such activities are allowed, but regulated.

About 3,000 families were relocated from these core zones in the first three decades of the project, and from 2005 until 2023, about 22,000 families were moved. Most relocations were involuntary and some plunged those ousted into deeper poverty.

In Sariska tiger reserve in Rajasthan, northwestern India, the first relocation was made during 1976-77. Some of the families returned to the reserve after being given land unsuitable for farming as compensation. This was a poor advertisement for relocation which few other communities opted for voluntarily.

After they were moved from Rajaji tiger reserve in 2012, Gujjar pastoralists who make their living grazing buffalo were prompted to take up farming on new land. With little experience in agriculture, and having been denied their traditional source of income, many struggled to adjust.

About 3,000 families were relocated from core zones in the first three decades of Project Tiger ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Gujjar did at least gain access to water pumps and electricity. In one case, in the Bhadra tiger reserve in Karnataka, southwestern India, relocation was less painful as people were offered quality agricultural land who already had prior farming experience.

Most people who lost their right to graze livestock or collect forest produce in newly established tiger reserves went on to labour in tea and coffee plantations or factories.

Despite widespread relocations, the tiger population in India continued to plummet, reaching an all-time low of fewer than 1,500 in 2006. Tigers became extinct in Sariska and Panna tiger reserves in 2004 and 2007 respectively.

Local extinction in Sariska prompted the government to enlist the help of tiger biologists and social scientists in 2005. This task force found that illegal hunting of tigers was still happening, their claws, teeth, bones and skin harvested for use in Chinese medicine. Mining and grazing had also continued within many reserves.

Corridors of power

The tiger task force acknowledged that having the local community onside helped prevent illegal hunting and forest fires. The Soliga tribes of Biligiri Rangananthaswamy temple tiger reserve in Karnataka decided not to relocate when offered compensation, but instead took up work rooting out invasive plants like lantana and curbing illegal hunting and timber felling. The Soliga are among the very few communities who have been rewarded with rights in tiger reserves.

Similarly, in Parambikulam tiger reserve in Kerala, a state on India's tropical Malabar coast, communities that were not relocated found work as tour guides and forest guards. People here have supplemented their income by collecting and selling honey, wild gooseberry and medicinal spices, under the joint supervision of the community and forest department officials. Many families have been able to give up cattle rearing as a result, reducing grazing pressure on the forest.

In Sariska tiger reserve in Rajasthan, northwestern India, the first relocation was made during 1976-77. Some of the families returned to the reserve after being given land unsuitable for farming as compensation. This was a poor advertisement for relocation which few other communities opted for voluntarily.

After they were moved from Rajaji tiger reserve in 2012, Gujjar pastoralists who make their living grazing buffalo were prompted to take up farming on new land. With little experience in agriculture, and having been denied their traditional source of income, many struggled to adjust.

The Gujjar did at least gain access to water pumps and electricity. In one case, in the Bhadra tiger reserve in Karnataka, southwestern India, relocation was less painful as people were offered quality agricultural land who already had prior farming experience. Most people who lost their right to graze livestock or collect forest produce in newly established tiger reserves went on to labour in tea and coffee plantations or factories. Despite widespread relocations, the tiger population in India continued to plummet, reaching an all-time low of fewer than 1,500 in 2006. Tigers became extinct in Sariska and Panna tiger reserves in 2004 and 2007 respectively.

Local extinction in Sariska prompted the government to enlist the help of tiger biologists and social scientists in 2005. This task force found that illegal hunting of tigers was still happening, their claws, teeth, bones and skin harvested for use in Chinese medicine. Mining and grazing had also continued within many reserves.

—The Conversation

PHOTO: PTI

Pak reports 1st poliovirus case in last 16 years

ISLAMABAD, 6 SEPT

Authorities in Pakistan on Friday reported its first polio case in the capital Islamabad in the last 16 years, a setback to the national efforts aimed at eradicating the crippling virus from the country. Ac-cording to the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio at the National Institute of Health, wild po-liovirus type 1 (WPV1) was detected in a child at Union Council Rural 4 of Islamabad. The newest case marked the 17th polio case this year in Pakistan. "It is incredibly heartbreaking that another Pakistani child has been affected by a disease that has no cure but is entirely preventable with the help of an eas-ily accessible vaccine," said Ayesha Raza Farooq, the Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication. *—PTI*

Two suicide bombers gunned down in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, 6 SEPT

At least two suicide bombers were killed in a terror attack at a military headquarters in northwestern Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, sources said. Security forces said they eliminated two out of the five suicide bombers in the ongoing gunbattle triggered after the massive terror attack at Mohmand Rifles Headquarters in Ghalanai town of Mohmand district bordering Afghanistan. Ghalanai Headquarters is located in the Mohmand tribal district, about 50 kilometres from Peshawar. Mohmand district has seen a rise in terror activities by the Jamatul Ahrar militant group, which is part of the outlawed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. It is believed the Jamatul Ahrar group is behind the attack. *—PTI*

Nepal lifts ban on TikTok

KATHMANDU, 6 SEPT

Effective from Friday, Nepal has lifted the ban on popular social media App TikTok with some pre-conditions. Nepal had banned TikTok on 12 November last year, arguing that the social networking site was responsible for disturbing social harmony in the country, which invited widespread criticism from the general public. A notice by Nepal Telecommunication, the government-owned body, said, "This is to notify all the Internet Service Providers and Mobile Service Providers that the ban imposed on TikTok has been withdrawn." The notice follows an August 22 cabinet decision that said the ban was lifted with some pre-conditions. *—PTI*

China halts foreign adoptions of its children

BEIJING, 6 SEPT

The Chinese government is ending its international adoption program, and the US is seeking clarifica-tion on how the decision will affect hundreds of American families with pending applications. At a daily briefing on Thursday, Mao Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, said China was no longer allowing intercountry adoptions of the country's children, with the only ex-ception for blood relatives to adopt a child or a stepchild. She didn't explain the decision other than to say that it was in line with the spirit of relevant international conventions. In a phone call with US dip-lomats in China, Beijing said it "will not continue to process cases at any stage" other than those cases covered by an exception clause. ***—Courtesy, The Guardian***

Israeli forces withdraw from Jenin after major op

Hundreds of troops were involved in the deadliest operation

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, 6 SEPT

Palestinians inspect the damage at a tent area in the courtyard of Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital, hit by an Israeli bombardment on Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip PHOTO: PTI

Israeli forces appeared to have withdrawn from three refugee camps in the occupied West Bank by Friday morning, after a more-than week-long military operation that left dozens dead and a trail of destruction.

Overnight, Israeli armoured personnel carriers were seen leaving the Jenin refugee camp from a checkpoint set up on one of the main roads, and an Associated Press reporter inside the camp saw no evidence of any remaining troops inside as dawn broke early Friday morning.

During the operation, Israeli military officials said they were targeting militants in Jenin, Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camps in an attempt to curb recent attacks against Israeli civilians they say have become more sophisticated and deadly.

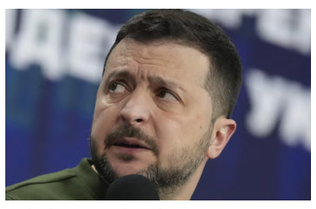
Troops were pulled out of the Tulkarem camp by Friday morning and had left Al-Faraa earlier, but in a statement the Israeli military suggested the operation was not yet over.

Hundreds of Israeli troops have been involved for more than a week in what has been their deadliest operation in the occupied West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began, employing what the United Nations called "lethal war-like tactics."Focus has been the Jenin camp, a stronghold of Palestinian militancy that has grown since the Hamas attack on Israel that started the war in Gaza 11 months ago. *—AP*

MORE SECURITY AID

Zelenskyy meets top military leaders on air defence

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, 6 SEPT



Volodymyr Zelenskyy PHOTO: PTI

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met Friday with top United States military leaders and more than 50 partner nations in Germany to press for more weapons support as Washington announced it would provide another USD 250 million in security assistance to Kyiv.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the meeting of the leaders was taking place during a dynamic moment in Ukraine's fight against Russia, as it conducts its first offensive operations of the war while facing a significant threat from Russian forces near a key hub in the Donbas.

So far the surprise assault inside Russia's Kursk territory has not drawn away President Vladimir Putin's focus from taking the Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk, which provides critical rail and supply links for the Ukrainian army. Losing Pokrovsk could put additional Ukrainian cities at risk.

While Kursk has put Russia on the defensive, "we know Putin's malice runs deep," Austin cautioned in prepared remarks to the media before the Ukraine Defence Contact Group met.The US is also focused on resourcing a variety of air-to-ground missiles that the newly delivered F-16 fighter jets can carry, including the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile. *—AP*

Telegram's CEO says his arrest is 'misguided'

PARIS, 6 SEPT

Pavel Durov PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov promised to step up efforts to fight criminality on the messag-ing app, his first public comments since French authorities handed him preliminary charges for allegedly allowing the platform's use for criminal activity. In a Telegram post late Thursday, Durov defended himself against the French judicial investigation, suggesting that he shouldn't have been targeted personally.

"Using laws from the pre-smartphone era to charge a CEO with crimes committed by third parties on the platform he manages is a misguided approach," the post said

Durov said surging numbers of Telegram users "caused growing pains that made it easier for criminals to abuse our platform." French investigators detained Durov in late August as part of a sweeping probe opened earlier this year. Released on 5 million euros bail, Durov has to report to a police station twice a week. Russia-born, he has amassed multiple citizenships, including French.

French allegations against Durov include that Telegram is used for child sexual abuse material and drug trafficking, and that the platform refused to share information or documents with investigators when required by law. Durov said "French authorities had numerous ways to reach me to request assistance." He said he also had previously worked with them to "establish a hotline with Telegram to deal with the threat of terrorism in France." *—AP*

17 students killed after fire in school dormitory

NAIROBI, 6 SEPT

At least 17 students were killed while 13 more suffered serious burn injuries after a fire in a boarding school dormitory in central Kenya, police say.

The death toll could rise, police warned on Friday, following the disaster at Hillside Endarasha Primary School in Nyeri county, as the survivors are being treated in hospitals.

The identities and ages of the victims were not immediately available, but most were described as chil-dren.

The primary school caters to some 800 pupils, aged between five and 12. The cause of the fire on Thursday night was being investigated, police spokeswoman Resila Onyango said, adding that "necessary action" would be taken.

An ambulance drives inside the Hillside Endarasha Primary school following a fire incident in Nyeri, Kenya

The school is located about 170km north of the capital, Nairobi. *—AP*

Workers cut redundant branches of trees ahead of the landfall of typhoon Yagi in Haikou, South China's Hainan Province PHOTO: XINHUA

Typhoon Yagi makes landfall in China as 400,000 are evacuated

BEIJING, 6 SEPT

Transport links shuttered as Asia's strongest storm this year drenches southern China and will affect Vietnam and Laos.

Typhoon Yagi registers as the world's second-most powerful tropical cyclone in 2024, after Category 5 Atlantic Hurricane Beryl, and the most severe in the Pacific basin.

On Friday, at least 419,367 residents in Hainan, a popular holiday destination, were relocated before Yagi's landfall, state news agency Xinhua reported.

The storm had more than doubled in strength since killing 16 people in the northern Philippines earlier this week.

It is expected to sweep towards other parts of Hainan and Guangdong province before moving to the Beibu Gulf.

The Ministry of Water Resources on Thursday raised its emergency response to flooding in both prov-inces to the third-highest tier.

Asia's strongest storm this year is also forcing tens of thousands of people to hunker down in neigh-bouring Vietnam, where it is expected to hit over the weekend.

Vietnam's Civil Aviation Authority said four airports in the north, including Hanoi's Noi Bai Internation-al, would be closed on Saturday.

In southern China, transport links were mostly shuttered on Friday. Many flights were cancelled in Hai-nan, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau.

The world's longest sea crossing, the main bridge linking Hong Kong with Macau and Zhuhai in Guang-dong, was closed.

In Hong Kong, the stock exchange was shuttered while schools and banks were closed on Friday.

—AP

Kamala raises $361M in August, says campaign

- Kamala's team says it ended the month with USD 404 million on hand for the final sprint to election day, USD 109 million more than Trump's campaign says it had

WASHINGTON, 6 SEPT

US Vice President Kamala Harris raised well more than double what former President Donald Trump took in from donors in August, her campaign announced on Friday, saying it raised USD 361 million from nearly 3 million donors in her first full month as a candidate.

Trump's team had announced on Wednesday he brought in USD 130 million over the same period. Harris' team says it ended the month with USD 404 million on hand for the final sprint to Election Day, USD 109 million more than Trump's campaign says it had at the end of August.

The massive Harris war chest is being used to fund a USD 370 million paid media effort for the final two months of the campaign, and to pay for its more than 2,000 field staff spread through more than 310 offices in battleground states.

Harris' fundraising builds on the USD 310 million she raised in July, the overwhelming majority of which came in after she took over President Joe Biden's campaign after he dropped out that month. The tick-et swap has helped the Democratic party reverse the fundraising edge Trump had developed in the prior months, when voter doubts about Biden's fitness for another term dampened donor — and voter — enthusiasm. *—AP*

Father of Georgia school shooting suspect arrested

WINDER, 6 SEPT

The father of the teenager accused of opening fire at a Georgia high school, killing four people and wounding nine, was arrested on various charges including second-degree murder, authorities said.

Colin Gray, 54, the father of Colt Gray, was charged with four counts of involuntary manslaughter, two counts of second-degree murder and eight counts of cruelty to children, the Georgia Bureau of Investi-gation said in a social media post on Thursday.

In Georgia, second-degree murder means that a person has caused the death of another person while committing second-degree cruelty to children, regardless of intent. It is punishable by 10 to 30 years while malice murder and felony murder carry a minimum sentence of life. *—AP*

TREATED LIKE GARBAGE: FRENCH WOMAN SHARES HORROR OF RAPE

AVIGNON, 6 SEPT

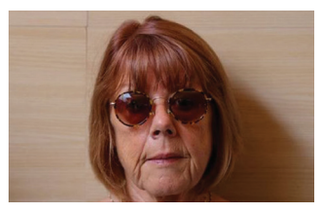


PHOTO: @MOTHERSHIPSG

A French woman whose husband has admitted drugging her and inviting more than 80 men to rape her over the course of a decade has said she "was sacrificed on the altar of vice" and treated "like a rag doll".

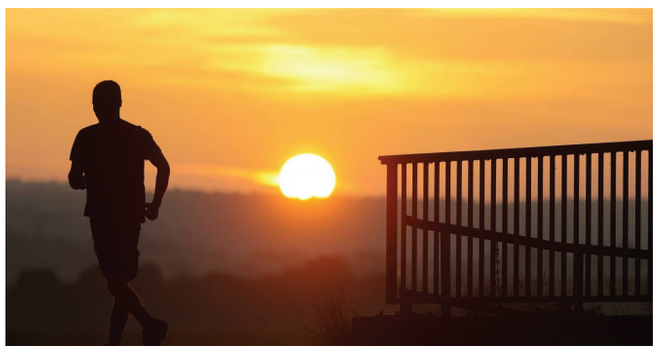
Gisèle Pélicot, 72, said "police saved my life" when they investigated her husband, Dominique Pélicot's, computer in November 2020, after a security guard caught him filming up the skirts of women in a su-permarket near their home in a village in southern France. Police said they found a file labelled "abuses" on a USB drive connected to his computer that contained 20,000 images and films of his wife being raped almost 100 times. "I was sacrificed on the altar of vice," she said. "They regarded me like a rag doll, like a garbage bag.

Courtesy, The Guardian

FEELING THE HEAT

Earth breaks record for hottest summer

BONN, 6 SEPT



The Augusts of both 2024 and 2023 tied for the hottest Augusts globally at 16.82 degrees Celsius PHOTO: DPA

Summer 2024 sweltered to Earth's hottest on record, making it even more likely that this year will end up as the warmest humanity has measured, European climate service Copernicus reported Friday.

And if this sounds familiar, that's because the records the globe shattered were set just last year as human-caused climate change, with a temporary boost from an El Nino, keeps dialling up tempera-tures and extreme weather, scientists said.

The northern meteorological summer — June, July and August — averaged 16.8 degrees Celsius ac-cording to Copernicus. That's 0.03 degrees Celsius warmer than the old record in 2023. Copernicus records go back to 1940, but American, British and Japanese records, which start in the mid-19th cen-tury, show the last decade has been the hottest since regular measurements were taken and likely in about 120,000 years, according to some scientists.

The Augusts of both 2024 and 2023 tied for the hottest Augusts globally at 16.82 degrees Celsius. July was the first time in more than a year that the world did not set a record, a tad behind 2023, but be-cause June 2024 was so much hotter than June 2023, this summer as a whole was the hottest, Coper-nicus Director Carlo Buontempo said.

It's a sweaty grip because with the high temperatures, the dew point — one of several ways to meas-ure the air's humidity — probably was at or near record high this summer for much of the world, Buontempo said.

With a forecasted La Nina — a temporary natural cooling of parts of the central Pacific — the last four months of the year may no longer be record-setters like most of the past year and a half. But it's not likely cool enough to keep 2024 from breaking the annual record, Buontempo said. *—AP*

'Impartial force' must be deployed in Sudan: UK

GENEVA, 6 SEPT

UN-backed human rights investigators on Friday urged the creation of an "independent and impartial force" to protect civilians in Sudan's war, blaming both sides for war crimes including murder, mutila-tion and torture and warning that foreign governments which arm and finance them could be complic-it.

The fact-finding team, in their first report since being created by the UN's main human rights body last October, also accused the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which are fighting Sudan's army, and its allies of crimes against humanity including rape, sexual slavery and persecution on ethnic or gender grounds.

While the killings, displacements and forced starvation have been long known, the call for creation of an independent force marks the latest sign of desperation from rights advocates both within the country and abroad to halt the crisis. The experts focused on a period from January and August this year. They visited three neighbouring countries and took testimonies from over 180 survivors and witnesses to the conflict that now has spread to 14 of Sudan's 18 states. *—AP*

Rupee rises 2 paise to settle at 83.95 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

The rupee gained 2 paise to close at 83.95 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid a weak greenback in overseas markets. However, negative domestic markets, rise in crude oil prices, and outflow of foreign capital capped sharp gains, forex traders said. At the interbank currency market, the local unit opened at 83.97 and witnessed an intra-day high of 83.91 against the American currency. The unit, which traded in the range of 83.91-83.97, finally settled at 83.95 (provisional), registering a gain of 2 paise. It had closed at 83.97 on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.14 per cent to 100.96 points. *—PTI*

Gold rises Rs 100; silver bounces Rs 1,200

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

Silver prices surged Rs 1,200 to Rs 85,800 per kg, while gold rose Rs 100 to Rs 74,200 per 10g in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. In the previous session, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at Rs 74,100 per 10g. The silver metal had ended higher at Rs 84,600 per kg in the previous session on Thursday. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices due to increased demand by jewellers and stockists as well as a jump in the precious metal rates in the overseas markets. Globally, Comex gold rose 0.22 per cent higher at USD 2,548.80 per ounce. Following a strong monthly increase in July, gold posted another healthy gain in August to finish 3.6 per cent higher at USD 2,513 per ounce internationally, according to a report by World Gold Council (WGC). *—PTI*

ISA, MIGA set up multi-donor solar trust fund

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), part of World Bank Group Guarantees and the International Solar Alliance (ISA), on Friday announced the setting up of a fund to support solar projects. The MIGA-ISA Solar Facility, a multi-donor trust fund, will combine ISA's technical expertise and MIGA's capacity to mobilise financing, creating an innovative mechanism to accelerate the global adoption of solar energy, according to a statement. The facility will offer concessional financing tools, including first-loss instruments and reinsurance capacity, to improve project bankability and lower the cost of MIGA guarantees. Initially, the facility will focus on supporting Sub-Saharan Africa, with plans to expand globally, the statement said. Administered by MIGA, the facility will help scale up its guarantee issuance, mobilising private capital for solar and distributed energy projects. *—PTI*

Steel industries, Goyal to discuss unfair competition

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said he has invited the steel industry to discuss about the "unfair" competition that some of them are facing to take appropriate steps with a view to promote the sector's growth. Certain steel industry players have raised concerns over rising imports from China at lower rates. On 5 September, he mooted the idea of introducing a border adjustment tax to protect the domestic players by providing a level-playing field against increasing imports. Goyal also said that the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) aims to integrate India, Middle East and Europe through UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and the European Union. *—PTI*

Sensex tanks 1,017 pts to close at 2-week low

Investors' wealth plummets by Rs 5.49L cr amid market crash

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

Falling for the fourth straight day, benchmark Sensex tanked 1,017 points to close at a two-week low on Friday due to selling in IT, oil & gas and PSU bank shares triggered by weak global trends and foreign fund outflows.

Investors' wealth plummeted by Rs 5.49 lakh crore as markets faced a massive correction tracking a weak trend in global peers.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,017.23 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 81,183.93, the lowest closing level since 23 August. As many as 24 Sensex shares closed in the red while six advanced. During the day, it plunged 1,219.23 points or 1.48 per cent to 80,981.93.

The NSE Nifty dropped 292.95 points or 1.17 per cent to close at 24,852.15, its third day of decline.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, State Bank of India tanked over 4 per cent. NTPC, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank and ITC were the other major laggards.

A total of 2,541 stocks declined while 1,406 advanced and 87 remained unchanged on the BSE **PHOTO: ANI**

Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, JSW Steel and Maruti were among the gainers.

"The domestic market was in panic today due to the SEBI's deadline over FIIs disclosure norm, however this is not expected to impact India's lucrativeness to FIIs in the long-term.

"Coupled with lack of new market catalysts and elevated valuations, a muted trend is expected to continue in the short-term. Global markets are also adopting a cautious stance ahead of the release of the US non-farm payroll data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The sell-off was broad-based, with the banking and energy sectors taking the biggest hit. Broader indices also saw declines, losing more than a per cent each.

The recent weakness in US markets has stalled the momentum in Indian markets, causing participants to become cautious ahead of the upcoming jobs data, Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dropped 1.41 per cent while the BSE smallcap index declined 0.96 per cent. All indices ended in the negative territory. Telecommunication plunged 3.23 per cent, oil & gas (2.19 per cent), bankex (1.93 per cent), capital goods (1.70 per cent) and services (1.58 per cent).

A total of 2,541 stocks declined while 1,406 advanced and 87 remained unchanged on the BSE. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,181.84 points or 1.43 per cent while the Nifty declined 383.75 points or 1.52 per cent. *—PTI*

'WILL COME DOWN'

Food inflation may rise due to floods: Union Bank report

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Food inflation, which has moderated a bit lately is further expected to come down in the coming months, Union Bank of India noted in a report, citing progressing Southwest monsoon and sufficient water in reservoirs across regions.

A rise in reservoir levels, coupled with improved sowing of kharif crops are expected to keep the supply-side concerns at bay for some time. However, the report cautioned that any negative surprise may trigger it upwards.

"With at least one more month to be covered by the monsoon, any negative surprise on the monsoon front whether deficit of rain or flooding will again trigger the food price inflation on the upper side," said the report

The retail inflation CPI softened drastically in July to 3.54 per cent from over 5 per cent in the previous month. Food inflation is currently at an over-a-year low.

Kharif crop sowing is progressing steadily, with farmers planting crops across 1,087.33 lakh hectares so far, a 1.91 per cent increase, as against 1,066.89 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

Commodity-wise, paddy, pulses, oilseeds, millets, and sugarcane sowing have been higher year-on-year. Sowing for cotton and jute/mesta has, on the other side, been on the lower side.

In the 2023 Kharif season, the total area under cultivation across the country was 1,107.15 lakh hectares

On the monsoon front, the cumulative rainfall over the country has turned from a deficit to an 8 per cent surplus now. *—ANI*

'There will be no impact on India-US ties post election'

WASHINGTON, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

The relations between India and the US over the last three decades have become strong and well entrenched irrespective of whether a Democrat or a Republican is elected as a president, a top American think-tank expert has said, exuding confidence that bilateral ties would remain unchanged in the next administration.

These remarks were made by Aparna Pande, the research fellow at the prestigious Hudson Institute think-tank.

"There will be no impact on the India-US relationship because India-US relations over the last three decades have become strong and well entrenched. Irrespective of whether a Democrat or a Republican is elected president, the relationship will remain just as strong, whether it's economic, whether it's commercial, defence or strategic," Pande told PTI.

"India matters to the US national security strategy. The last three national security strategies have listed India as a key partner, not only in pushing back against the rise of China but in the economic and defence realm as well," she said.

The key signature elements of the Biden administration have been the Indo-Pacific Strategy and Quad.

"But as you know well, Indo-Pacific actually was started under the Trump administration. So if Trump returns I don't see any change in the Indo-Pacific strategy, because, for him, China remains the key threat and rival. Since it was under him that Quad was restarted, Quad will also continue to remain just as prominent," she said.

"Similarly, under the Harris administration, both the Indo-Pacific and Quad will remain important. There will be tweaks. The Biden administration brought ICET, which is an Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, which includes a strong defence partnership, as well as civilian and semiconductors," she said. *—PTI*

STALIN IN US

CM MK Stalin stated that he held talks with Nike on its expansion for footwear production in Chennai **PHOTO: ANI**

Stalin signs MoUs for ₹850 cr with Lincoln Electric, Precision

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday said that the state has secured MOUs (memorandum of understanding), worth Rs 850 crore with US-based companies Lincoln Electric, Vishay Precision, and Visteon.

On Thursday, Tamil Nadu secured a Rs 2000 crore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Trilliant to establish a manufacturing unit as well as create their Development and Global Support Centre in the state.

Stalin further stated that he also held productive talks with Nike on its expansion for footwear production in Chennai as well as engaged with healthcare firm Optum for creating a talent pipeline in the same sector in the state.

Earlier on Wednesday, Stalin signed MOUs with Eaton, a multinational power management company, for Rs 200 crore R&D and engineering centre expansion in Chennai. Stalin, taking to X, informed that these MOUs will help in creating 500 jobs and that the government has secured a pact with Assurant, a risk management solutions provider, to set up the first Global Capability Centre.

Stalin is currently on an official visit to the United States to secure support and investments aimed at boosting the prosperity of the state.

On 31 August, 2024, an agreement was signed with Ohmium for the establishment of a new factory in the Chengalpattu district for producing electrolysers and green hydrogen, with an investment of Rs 400 crores and creating 500 job opportunities.

Stalin said that the deal marked an important step in nurturing the ecosystem for green energy production and fuelling a sustainable future. *—ANI*

BRIGADE ENTERPRISES RAISES RS 1,500 CR BY SELLING SHARES

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Bengaluru-based Brigade Enterprises has raised Rs 1,500 crore by selling equity shares to institutional investors as part of its strategy to expand business.

The company on 2 September launched its qualified institutional placement (QIP) issue to raise funds. The issue closed on 5 September 5.

In a regulatory filing on Friday, Brigade Enterprises said a committee of directors approved the allotment of 1,30,43,478 equity shares to eligible qualified institutional buyers.

The shares were allotted at an issue price of Rs 1,150 per equity share.

Hence, the company raised Rs 1,500 crore through the QIP route.

The shares were issued at a discount of 1.26 per cent of the floor price of Rs 1,164.70 per equity share. *—PTI*

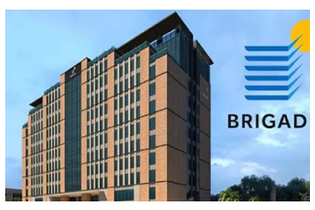


PHOTO: X

Swiggy launches Incognito Mode

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

On-demand convenience platform Swiggy on Friday said it has launched an industry-first Incognito Mode feature, allowing users to place orders privately across food and quick commerce.

Whether planning a surprise, indulging in a personal treat, or making a discreet purchase, Incognito Mode keeps these orders out of the app's history, eliminating the need to manually delete them.

Available on both Swiggy Food and Instamart, Incognito Mode ensures that users can place orders and keep their selections private.

Swiggy stated that the Incognito Mode is also ideal for discreet purchases, such as personal wellness products on Swiggy Instamart, as this feature ensures that such orders remain private, giving users confidence that their choices will not be visible to others.

The feature is currently available to 10 per cent of Swiggy users and will be rolled out to all users in the coming days.

The Incognito Mode feature can be activated via a toggle in the user's cart. Once activated, a reminder will appear, confirming that Incognito Mode is on. After the order is delivered, it will remain trackable for three hours, allowing users to manage any post-delivery concerns. After that, the order is discreetly hidden from the order history, ensuring that the purchase remains private. *—PTI*

Strides gets USFDA nod for Theophylline tablets

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Strides Pharma Science Ltd on Friday said its arm has received approval from the US health regulator for its generic version of Theophylline extended-release tablets indicated for management of various respiratory conditions, including chronic asthma.

The approval granted by the US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) to Strides Pharma Global Pte Ltd, Singapore, is for generic version of Theophylline Extended-Release Tablets 300 mg and 450 mg, Strides Pharma said in a regulatory filing.

The product is bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to the Reference Listed Drug (RLD), THEO-DUR of Schering Corp, it added.

Theophylline extended-release tablets are indicated for the treatment of symptoms and reversible airflow obstruction associated with chronic asthma and other chronic lung diseases, such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. *—PTI*

AUGUST AUTO SALES DIP DUE TO EXCESS RAINFALL

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Auto retail sales in India experienced a significant decline in August 2024, primarily due to excessive rainfall during this monsoon season, according to a report by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

The report highlighted a 7.01 per cent month-on-month decline in overall retail auto sales, falling from 20.34 lakh units in July to 18.91 lakh units in August. However, despite this monthly setback, the sector witnessed a modest 2.88 per cent year-on-year growth compared to August 2023. *—ANI*

NON-VEG BY 12%

Cost of vegetarian thali drops by 8%

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: ANI

Softening of retail inflation has started reflecting in the food plates, with prices of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian thalis (full meals) witnessing a notable drop in August this year compared to the same time last year and the previous month, CRISIL MI&A Research noted in its latest report.

The data shows that on an annual basis, the cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali declined by 8 per cent. On the other hand, the non-vegetarian thalis saw an even steeper drop of 12 per cent.

The reduction in the cost of the veg thali year-over-year was mainly due to a dramatic 51 per cent drop in tomato prices. Tomato constituted 14 per cent of the cost of the vegetarian thali in August.

Tomatoes, which constituted about 14 per cent of the cost of a vegetarian thali in August 2024, experienced a significant price drop of 51 per cent year-on-year. Prices fell from Rs 102 per kg in August 2023 to Rs 50 per kg in August 2024, owning to fresh arrivals from southern and western states.

Another major contributor that helped reduce the cost of the thali was a 27 per cent drop in LPG prices.

In March 2024, the price of a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder in Delhi was Rs 803, down from Rs 1,103 in August 2023, which positively contributed to the ease in the cost. he month saw a declining thali cost as the prices of vegetable oil, chilli, and cumin, which together account for less than 5 per cent of the veg thali cost, also eased, falling by 6 per cent, 30 per cent, and 58 per cent, respectively, over the year. As per observations, the drop in the cost of non-vegetarian thalis was due to a 13 per cent year-on-year drop in broiler chicken prices, which make up about 50 per cent of the total cost. *—PTI*

Tomato, poultry prices dip cut cost on meals

A decline in the price of tomatoes and poultry due to the holy month of Shravan where many abstain from consuming meat helped in a reduction of home-cooked meals in August, a report said on Friday. The cost of a vegetarian meal declined 4 per cent to Rs 31.2 in August from Rs 32.6 per plate in July.

SC agrees to list plea on Byju's insolvency case

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Supreme Court on Friday agreed to list for an early hearing the appeal of US-based creditor Glas Trust Company LLC against a judgment of the NCLAT, which had stayed insolvency proceedings against ed-tech firm BYJU's and approving its Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the BCCI.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was urged by senior advocate NK Kaul, appearing for the ed-tech major, that the case needed to be heard at the earliest.

Kaul said, "The only funding was done by the promoters and today no one has brought any external borrowing. We have to show today how malafide the petition (of US firm) is."

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the US-based creditor, said it also wanted an early hearing.

Earlier on 22 August, the bench had refused to pass an interim order to ensure that the committee of creditors (CoC) does not hold any meeting in pursuance of the insolvency proceedings against the embattled ed-tech firm. *—ANII*

PHOTO: PTI

Vinesh Phogat resigns from Indian Railways

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Former India wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways citing personal reasons amid speculation that she would be joining the Congress party. "Serving Indian Railways has been a memorable and proud time of my life," she posted on X with a picture of her resignation letter. She was employed as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) with Northern Railways. "At this point in my life, I have decided to separate myself from the railway service and have submitted my resignation to the competent authorities of the Indian Railways," said the wrestler who met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi earlier this week. *—PTI*

Tanisha-Dhruv bow out of Taipei Open

TAIPEI, 6 SEPT

India's Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila bowed out of the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament after a hard-fought loss in the mixed doubles quarter-finals here on Friday. The Indian duo lost 20-22, 12-21 to Thailand's fourth-seeded pair Pakkapon Teeraratsakul and Phataimas Muenwong in a match lasting just over half an hour. Tanisha and Dhruv, ranked 97th in the world, started strong, leading 6-3, and later held a 19-16 advantage in the first game. However, their Thai opponents ranked 28th globally, mounted a comeback with a four-point burst to earn a game point.*—PTI*

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for DL season finale in Brussels

Chopra won gold in Tokyo and silver in Paris Olympics

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world.

The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday.

The 26-year-old is two points adrift of Czechia's Jakub Vadlech. Grenada's Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber occupy the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively. Peters had pipped Weber in the Zurich meet.

Chopra, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and added a silver to his kitty in the Paris edition last month, has been struggling with his fitness this season.

India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra
PHOTO: PTI

The Haryana-lad has talked about a groin injury troubling him since before the Olympic Games that has come in the way of his quest to hit the 90m mark.

The Indian finished second in the Lausanne Diamond Leg, bested by Peters, who threw 90.61m. In the Paris Olympics, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem took the gold with a monster throw of 92.97m.

- The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

"First goal, go to the doctor and make my groin 100 percent fit and also I will be technically better and try to throw far again," he had said last month about his plans for this year and the coming one.

Chopra won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlejch in the winner-takes-all finale in Eugene, USA, last year.

Each Diamond League season finale champion is awarded a prestigious "Diamond Trophy", USD 30,000 prize money, and a wild card for the World Athletics Championships.

The DL finale will mark the end of Chopra's season. *—PTI*

Simran through to the semifinals

PARIS, 6 SEPT

Indian track and field athlete Simran Sharma topped her heat and entered the semifinals of the women's 200m T12 event at the Paris Paralympics here on Friday.

Simran, who is the reigning world champion, topped her heat with a timing of 25.41s to make the semi-finals.

As per the rule, the winner of each heat qualifies for final A. The three fastest runners in each semifinal qualify for Final A.

The T12 classification in the Paralympics is for athletes with visual impairments.

Simran was born prematurely and spent the next 10 weeks in an incubator where it was discovered that she is visually impaired.

Coached by her husband Gajendra Singh, who works for the Army Service Corps, she trains at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

On Thursday, Simran missed out on a medal, finishing fourth in the Women's 100m T12 final.

Simran clocked 12.31 seconds in the four-player final after being hampered by a slow start. *—PTI*

Saini makes a stand for India B

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Until last week, Navdeep Saini hadn't touched a red ball for over seven months. He was hoping to ease himself into the season with a steady diet of white-ball cricket courtesy of the Delhi Premier League (DPL). But when the Duleep Trophy call-up came, as a late replacement for Mohammed Siraj, he had to hit the ground running.

Two days in, Saini has already had a bigger influence on the game than he may have imagined. A mix of stoic defense and the occasional free swing brought him an excellent half-century, his second in first-class cricket.

Navdeep Saini ***PHOTO: BCCI***

He occupied the crease for 349 minutes, his longest vigil, during a magnificent 205-run stand for the eighth wicket with Musheer Khan as India B recovered from 94 for 7 to post 321.

India B 134 for 2 (Mayank 36, Parag 27*, Saini 2-36) trail India A 321 (Musheer 181, Saini 56, Akash 4-60, Khaleel 2-54) by 187 runs. *—PTI*

Padikkal, Iyer take India D's lead to 202 runs

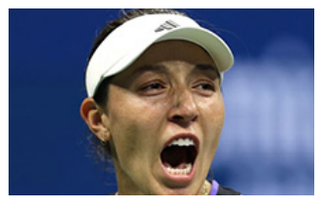
Fluent fifties from skipper Shreyas Iyer and Devdutt Padikkal saw India D stretch their lead to 202 runs against India C on the second day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Friday. Seeking to make an India comeback, Iyer struck 54 off 44 balls and laced his innings with nine fours and a six.

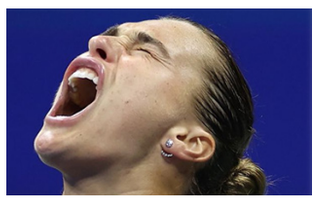
Pegula fights back to set up US Open final against Sabalenka

NEW YORK, 6 SEPT

American Pegula came back from a set, break, and break-point down to see off Karolina Muchova 1-6 6-4 6-2 and reach her first major singles final.

She will now face Sabalenka, who powered into the final for the second year in a row with a 6-3 7-6 (7-2) victory over American Emma Navarro 6-3 7-2. The Belarusian is the first women's player since the great Serena Williams in 2019 to reach back-to-back singles finals at Flushing Meadows. Sabalenka will be greeted by a wall of noisy support for New York-born Pegula on Saturday





Jessica Pegula and Aryna Sabalenka ***PHOTO: X***

but she already has experience in that area, having jokingly admonished the crowd for cheering for Navarro."Well now you're cheering for me, it's a bit too late," Sabalenka said as she began her post-match interview. Having previously promised to buy the crowd drinks if they cheered for her, Sabalenka joked: "Margaritas for everyone!"Pegula had previously lost her past six major quarter-finals before beating world number one Iga Swiatek on Thursday, and she followed that up with a battling victory over Muchova. *—AP*

ESFI to launch WESC Qualifiers in September

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Esports Federation of India (ESFI) is set to launch the qualifiers for the inaugural WAVES Esports Championship (WESC 2025) which will run from September to January next year, culminating in a grand finale here in February. The championship, a key feature of the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES), will feature India's top gamers competing in popular esports titles such as eFootball, WCC, and BGMI. The WESC 2025 will be a gender-inclusive event, featuring both team-based competitions in BGMI and individual contests in eFootball and WCC.*—PTI*

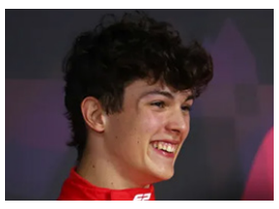


PHOTO: X

F1: Teenager Oliver Bearman to race for Haas in 2025

KANNAPOLIS, 6 SEPT

British teenager Oliver Bearman is returning to Formula 1 ahead of schedule after the Haas team said Friday he will replace the suspended Kevin Magnussen for next week's Azerbaijan Grand Prix. Bearman signed in July to race for Haas in 2025 but I'll make an early appearance with his new team in Baku next week because Magnussen is serving a one-race suspension for accumulating too many penalty points. The 19-year-old Bearman usually races in Formula 2 but was impressive as he finished in seventh place in his F1 debut for Ferrari at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in March after Carlos Sainz Jr. was sidelined with appendicitis. "It's definitely more of a challenge stepping in to race as a reserve driver, with limited prep-time and so on, but I'm in the fortunate position of having done it earlier.*—PTI*

Dravid joins RR on a multi-year contract

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

Former India captain Rahul Dravid was on Friday announced as the head coach of the Indian Premier League team Rajasthan Royals on a multi-year contract.

Dravid's tenure as India's head coach ended in June with the team winning the T20 World Cup for the second time. PTI had reported a few days ago that Dravid was set for his next move to RR.

"The former Royals' captain and coach spent five seasons with the franchise from 2011 to 2015, and will commence with the team immediately, working with Royals' director of cricket Kumar Sangakkara to implement the franchise's overall cricketing strategy," the franchise said in a statement.

Dravid has coached Rajasthan Royals in 2014 and has held different roles with the India U-19 team as well as at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. "His exceptional coaching capabilities are evident with the transformation he's driven in Indian cricket. He also has a deep connection to the franchise. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X / @FUTBOLPALESTINE

WC Qualifiers: Palestinians draw with South Korea

SEOUL, 6 SEPT

Australia fell to a shock 1-0 loss to Bahrain at home in the opening game of the third round of Asian World Cup qualifying.

Meanwhile, South Korea was held to 0-0 by the Palestinians in Seoul.

Despite losing all six previous games against Australia, Bahrain won thanks to an own goal from Harry Souttar with a minute remaining on the Gold Coast.

Abdulla Al-Khalasi's cross from the left side of the area hit the defender and flew past goalkeeper Mat Ryan.

Australia dominated the game but was reduced to 10 men when Kusini Yengi was red-carded after 77 minutes for a reckless tackle. "It's not the way that we want to start our campaign, a loss at home, but we have to go away and improve," Australia winger Craig Goodwin said. *—PTI*

IH can aim for gold in next Olympics: Sreejesh

PATNA, 6 SEPT

Riding high on the success of winning a bronze medal in Paris ending a four-decade-long dry spell the Indian hockey team now aims to build on this momentum with hopes of clinching gold at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, ace goalkeeper P R Sreejesh said on Friday.

The former national team captain, who announced his retirement after the Paris Olympics, told journalists in the Bihar capital that he saw the state as the future "sports hub".

"I see many positive developments in Bihar, particularly at the sports complex in Rajgir, which now features an astroturf and will host the women's Asian Cup Trophy tournament later this year," Sreejesh remarked.

He added, "I see no reason why Bihar cannot emerge as the country's next sports hub. I have met sports department officials here and found many initiatives, like the establishment of a sports university, quite impressive".

Sreejesh, who has taken up a new assignment as the coach for the junior men's hockey team, said he had set his eyes on the next Asia Cup and revealed that he was drawing inspiration from former cricket team captain Rahul Dravid.

Ace goalkeeper P R Sreejesh ***PHOTO: PTI***

After a successful playing career, Dravid, known as "The Wall" for his steadfast batting, has made significant contributions as head coach of the Indian cricket team, helping it to new heights.

Sreejesh broke into a wide grin that like his idol, his skills earned him the sobriquet "The Great Wall of Indian Hockey".

At 36, Sreejesh reminisced about his experiences at the Paris Olympics and expressed hope that the national team would "revive the old glory of Indian hockey" by aiming for gold in Los Angeles and performing well in tournaments leading up to the 2028 Games.

"We have a very talented team. Krishan Pathak, who has succeeded me, is an excellent goalkeeper," Sreejesh said, highlighting the importance of managing pressure and taking time to unwind between games. *—PTI*

Ben Duckett ***PHOTO: X***

Duckett hits 51, rain stops play against Sri Lanka

LONDON, 6 SEPT

England raced to 76-1 with Ben Duckett already reaching his half-century before bad light and then rain led to an extended stoppage on the opening day of the third and final test against Sri Lanka on Friday.

Sri Lanka, which is 2-0 down and has already lost the series, failed to take advantage of winning the toss and opting to bowl first under thick cloud cover at The Oval. England had only lost the wicket of Dan Lawrence (5) before the umpires deemed the light too poor and took the players off barely an hour into the morning session.

An early lunch was taken but then rain arrived on what was a dank and gloomy day in south London. By mid-afternoon, the players were still off the field and only 15 overs had been bowled. Duckett was onto 51 for his 10th half-century in 26 tests. *—PTI*

GLOBAL CHESS LEAGUE SEASON 2

Giri braces for insanely strong competition

LONDON, 6 SEPT

Indian Grandmaster Anish Giri is expecting an "insanely strong" line-up on his debut in the Global Chess League (GCL) which will be held from 3 to 12 October.

Representing the PBG Alaskan Knights, Giri will face off against some of the world's top players, including Magnus Carlsen (Alpine SG Pipers), Hikaru Nakamura (American Gambits), Viswanathan Anand (Ganges Grandmasters), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (upgrade Mumba Masters), and Ian Nepomniachtchi (Triveni Continental Kings).

"The line-up is stacked this time. My board is going to be insanely strong," Giri was quoted as saying by GCL.

Indian Grandmaster Anish Giri ***PHOTO: X/@NORWAYCHESS***

This will be Giri's first appearance in the GCL after missing last year due to scheduling conflicts.

"I am thrilled to be part of the event this year. I couldn't join last year due to a scheduling conflict, but I followed the finale with great excitement. Looking forward to being on the other side of the screen this time."

"London is among the most spectacular cities. There will be no shortage of sightseeing options, restaurants, and places to relax."

"We are yet to see if the concept will take off in our sport as well as it did in cricket, but such initiatives are important to try and push chess to further heights, using the momentum that it has gotten in the last few years," he said.

"I believe if we play our cards right, being part of the team will help each player shine. It can add to the pressure, but with a positive team spirit, it turns into support."

Giri's PBG Alaskan Knights team includes star players Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Tan Zhongyi, Alina Kashlinskaya, and Nihal Sarin. *—PTI*

Ronaldo gets emotional on scoring historic 900th goal

DUBAI, 6 SEPT

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 900th career goal, extending his lead at the top of goal-scoring charts in professional football.

Not part of the Ballon d'Or shortlist, but no problem as Cristiano Ronaldo goes about his business as usual. The Portuguese superstar scored his record-extending 900th career goal as his team defeated Croatia 2-1 in the first game of the UEFA Nations League on Thursday. Ronaldo inched closer to the milestone goal when he scored a glorious free-kick for his club Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia a few days ago. Last night, the 39-year-old reached a big milestone and celebrated as if he scored the first goal of his career.

Ronaldo, who plays his club

Cristiano Ronaldo ***PHOTO: X / @CRISTIANO***

football in Saudi Arabia, turned in a Nuno Mendes cross in the 34th minute of the match at the Estadio da Luz to script history in professional football.

He appeared emotional as he celebrated the goal, his 131st strike in a Portugal shirt. Half of his goals were scored for Real Madrid, with the remainder spread across his spells at Sporting Lisbon, Manchester United. *—AP*